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The current issue is the first of the seventh volume of the *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies (AJMS)*, published by the [Athens Institute for Education and Research](#).

Gregory T. Papanikos  
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## A Toy Museum in Education: Evaluation of Ankara University Toy Museum's Training Activities

By Müge Artar<sup>\*</sup>, Ceren Karadeniz<sup>±</sup>, Hülya Ateş<sup>‡</sup> & Banu Doğan<sup>†</sup>

*The toy presents a little discovered image of a culture. In addition to being an important object of nostalgia, it is also considered as a research and study subject. The rapidly increasing number of toy museums has also gained importance in transferring economic, sociological, social, and cultural characteristics of the toy. Toy museums have responsibilities such as protecting toys that are threatened with extinction during the rapid change in technology, conducting research on childhood and history of education, raising awareness of history, helping to establish intergenerational communication, and emphasizing the importance of toys in child development. Toy Museums develop educational activities for different ages and interest groups based on their collections. Effective use of collections in museums and the presentation of available resources for visitors with fun, attractive, and different learning methods is one of the characteristics of museum education. Learning from the object, which is one of the basic concepts of museum education, can provide an experience with real objects. The Ankara University Toy Museum can be used as an educational laboratory for courses in preschool, primary, and secondary school education programs within the context of its current collection. The museum can be visited with an appointment with a guide. Search and find activities through collection themes etc. are accompanied by the museum guides and educators. In this study, the evaluation of the design processes of the education booklets of the Toy Museum is determined. The booklets include museum guided tours, and structured educational activities like "before the museum, museum practice, and post museum" activities. Museum booklets have an evaluation section that enables the student to receive feedback where they are expected to make a sustainable contribution to the promotion of the museum. In this context, this paper evaluates the effectiveness of preschool, primary, and secondary school education books that were prepared for the toy museum in line with the feedback of students participating in museum education by establishing a link between the curriculum and the museum collection.*

**Keywords:** museum, toy museum, children's culture, museum education, museum booklet

### Introduction

The object is an important part of learning. The context of the object in the museum can be explained by showing both the richness of its collection and the fulfillment of educational functions through the object. Museum education is a field that improves communication and interaction between people and the environment. In the museum education process, museums and galleries are aimed to be an optimal learning environment for people of all ages. It is also acknowledged that museum education is a dynamic and constructive education

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that prepares children and young people for the future, and helps people adapt to the changing and developing world. It is inevitable for museums to prepare and implement edutainment activities for the interests and needs of children, young people, and adults by using museum objects in order to catch the time. Toy museums have aims such as bringing toys, which are a historical, social, and cultural product, to children, young people, and adults, to research the history of childhood, and to use the museum for educational and research purposes. The objects exhibited in the toy museum are suitable for social life, family life, and industrial history suitable for educational purposes, as well as being proper for planning activities that will enable children to develop their senses, imagination, and creativity.

The Ankara University Toy Museum aims to collect, protect, research, transfer children's toys, and play tools to new generations and promote the culture of play and toys with collection-oriented educational activities. Following the establishment of the Ankara University Toy Museum, respectively several samples were established as Musa Baran Toy Museum (1990), İstanbul Toy Museum (2005), İzmir Konak Municipality Ümraniye Toy Museum (2010), Antalya Toy and Play Museum (2011), Gaziantep Toy and Play Museum (2013), Samsun Canik Toy Museum (2017), Anadolu Toy Museum (2017), Ankara Çamlıdere Toy and Play Museum (2018) ve Şanlıurfa Toy and Play Museum (2019) in Turkey.

The Ankara University Toy Museum collection is used as a learning laboratory for many courses in preschool, primary, and secondary school curricula. Search and find and "find the themes" activities are accompanied by the other museum education programmes. There have been 20,402 preschool children, 30,055 elementary school children, and 13,000 adults who visited the museum for several purposes. Children participating in toy museum educational activities make logical inferences about objects, solve concrete problems, and participate in large and small group discussions instead of looking at the superficial properties of the objects.

The concept of the museum is included in the elementary school curriculum of the Ministry of National Education in detail. In secondary school programs, there are many elective courses especially Social Studies, Science, and Visual Arts, which include activities suitable for the museum consciousness learning area. It is aimed to use informal learning environments such as museums, art galleries, and archaeological sites more effectively for educational purposes in order to reveal students' and teacher's knowledge, skills, and abilities in artistic, cultural, and social fields and to improve their aesthetic tastes with the "museum education protocol" signed between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of National Education in 2016. In teacher training programs, studies in the field of museum education have been implemented in new programs that came to the agenda in the 1996–1997 academic year simultaneously with the primary education programs. In Preschool Teaching, Social Studies, and Classroom Teaching Programs, elective courses in which pre-service teacher training methods and techniques related to the effective use of museums in education were included in the teacher training programs of Education Faculties. The museum developed educational packages for Primary School 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> grades and Secondary School 5<sup>th</sup>–

8<sup>th</sup> grades which were based on the museum collection. Museum's educational purposes of the museum are as follows:

1. To create educational books that will provide opportunities for students to learn by doing and experiencing.
2. To collect the activities in social life, family life, social and political history, art, science and social sciences, etc. in a training book for preschool courses, primary school 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> grades, and secondary school 5<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grades for classroom teachers.
3. To reveal the views of students and teachers regarding the education books for preschool, elementary, and secondary school teachers and students.

This paper evaluates the effectiveness of preschool, primary, and secondary school education books that were prepared for the toy museum in line with the feedback of students participating in museum education by establishing a link between the curriculum and the museum collection.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Model*

A screening model is used in this qualitative study in which educational activities of the Ankara University Toy Museum and museum education books were evaluated. Scanning is a research model that describes the relationships, practices, perspectives, beliefs, or attitudes that existed in nature and society in the past or present. The current situation is determined with the documentary scanning model specific to the museum training packages of various toy museums. This is considering the information obtained from the Ankara University Toy Museum museum education books, preschool, primary school 1–4, secondary school 5–8. It has been prepared in line with the curriculum for classroom teachers and students. The activities in the educational books which were prepared for preschool, primary, and secondary school students and teachers are finalized in line with the feedbacks.

### *Study Group*

Toy Museums from Turkey and around the world consisted of the study group in the first phase of the study. Toy Museums in Turkey were examined in terms of educational activities. After examining the toy museums in the world with purposeful sampling in terms of accessibility, museums with educational packages were selected. Training books of toy museums are directly related to the collection of Museums. It is also determined that the educational books are prepared in relation to the national education programs of the country and the region in which they are located. In the second phase of the study, semi-structured interviews were

conducted with three different working groups consisting of preschool, primary, and secondary school students and teachers.

### *Collecting Data*

The data on the characteristics of the toy museum education packages were obtained via the internet and through correspondence with the museums. Documents, brochures, visual materials, and online publications related to the toy museum educational packages were evaluated.

### *Data Analysis*

During the data analysis process, the data obtained from the semi-structured interview forms were analyzed by two researchers and systematically entered into the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program. The research report was prepared based on the data classified and coded using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program and the observation forms.

## **Interpreting the Findings**

### *Toy, Play and Museum*

The history of the concept of play is dated to ancient times (Sormaz 2012, p. 123). According to Huizinga (2006), play is not the result of coming from various cultures or by coincidence, but it is the main element in the birth of cultural styles. Considering that play has an important appearance in our actions, it would not be wrong to say that we do not do this only with a reaction or instinct, but that there is a transformation from play to culture in its origin (And 2012, p. 27). Play is free where the child temporarily leaves real-life and enters his world in it. The play is also unique, it begins and ends with a specific time and place. It is also continuous and repeated like tradition (And 2012, p. 28). Play is tied to certain abstract or concrete rules system determined by the play itself or the player. The play allows children to gain experience that helps them learn about their world and other people. Play allows the child to research, learn, control, and establish a relationship between what he or she learned (Sormaz 2012, p. 128). Play is on the basis of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development with or without a specific purpose or rules but it gives optional pleasure in any situation. Play is a symbolic tool that enables the child to express his or her impulses and contradictions between the innate and the environment in physical and cognitive growth (Elkind 2011, p. 68). Children construct their own inner worlds in a play as economic structure, social beliefs and values determine it (Artar et al. 2004).

Play is an essential component of children's culture. The toy is the tool required by the play. The toy is an object that develops the child's imagination, entertains, educates, and teaches him to share (Sormaz 2012, p. 137). With the progress of industrialization and urbanization, the toy created by modern life is

separated from the traditional toy. Onur (2010, p. 14) states that traditional toys should be named as play material or objects. Since ancient times, one of the main functions of the toy is to prepare people for real life. The toy is also an object of research and examination that reflects the characteristics of the period in which it was produced. The toy constitutes a part of the historical materials that can transfer the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the period in which it is used from generation to generation. Toys also present undiscovered images of culture and civilization. Therefore, toys must be conserved and restored like other cultural heritage elements.

Considering that museums are institutions that should collect, preserve, promote and research objects and artifacts which are valuable for people, toy museums are expected to fulfill their duty of collecting and conserving toys (Karadeniz 2016, p. 13). According to ICOM, toy museums, which are considered "specialty museums", are the institutions that provide information and education about child and play culture by approaching the social history (Artar and Karadeniz 2017, p. 478). The primary purpose of toy museums is conservation play and toy culture. Besides, toy museums provide opportunities to compare past and present. Onur (2016), states that toys must be protected because they reflect the social and cultural characteristics of the period that they were produced. According to him, toy museums have the same functions as other museums as research and education. In these Museums, both art and cultural history are investigated through toys. The educational function also helps children to establish a relationship between generations by acquiring knowledge of history (Onur 2016). The toy museum is a dynamic museum that monitors the development of toys through the ages, investigates its meaning and function, reveals the social and historical conditions of the era in which it was produced, and interprets the conditions of the age. Meanwhile, it is an educational institution that collects, preserves, exhibits, researches, interprets toys for the cultural and academic wellness of the audience, and uses them for educational purposes.

Onur (2010) lists the toy museums, which are rapidly increasing in number in the world, as the reason for his suggestions to give importance to play and toys. In addition to toy museums in developed countries, the doll museum, toy and model museum, teddy bear museum, museum of play, puppet museum, education museum, school museum, children's museum, children's art museum, children's literature museum, digital game museum, children's science and exploration center and planetarium are increasing (Karadeniz 2010). In addition to being able to respond to an aesthetic taste and emotional need of children, toy museums also have functions such as asking their audience questions and directing them to research (Onur 2010, p. 12). Toy museums do not only compile, but also collect, and preserve nostalgic objects, such as collectors. They use the toy, which is also included in archeology, history, and ethnography museums, for interpretation, exhibitions, and education in different contexts. The purpose of establishing a toy museum is to bring the child and the toy together and to use the museum for education and research (Onur 2010, p. 12).

Toy museums, which conduct research on the history of games and toys, are in the category of museums of interest, unlike children's museums and Museums

of childhood. Childhood museums are a kind of social history museum that research the history of childhood where all kinds of childhood objects are situated. A children's museum is defined as a nonprofit educational and cultural institution committed to serving the needs and interests of children by providing exhibits and programs that stimulate curiosity and motivate learning (Association of Children's Museum 2020, Karadeniz 2016, p. 23). Children's museums are the best examples of where the basic principles of museum education are applied (Zilcioğlu 2008, p. 12).

Artar and Karadeniz (2017), mention that toy museums are fictionalized as child-friendly and family-friendly learning environments. In Turkey, the number of toy museums are increasing by the endeavor of private persons and legal entities: "It is important to prepare short and long term institutional plans and museum policies in the process of reaching the international standards required by the contemporary museum, and it is significant to share their aims, functions, management style, audience relations policies, and relations clearly, with other institutions of the museum within the scope of these policies (Artar and Karadeniz 2017, p. 489)".

### *Education in Toy Museums*

Ambrose and Paine (2006, p. 18) emphasize that the museum, which has been adopted as an institution that contributes to the formation and development of an individual's observation, logic, creativity, imagination and taste, has been carrying out activities such as observation, practice, and prediction with contemporary teaching methods and techniques for raising individuals questioning, thinking, and creativity skills since the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The museum also strives to become an institution that offers a different learning and entertainment experience to its audience.

There have been many kinds of research that museums can be used as effective educational institutions from primary school up to the end of university education. Marcus et al. (2012, pp. 7–8) stated that museums provide rare learning experiences that can increase students' historical knowledge and understanding skills, that they are a source of access to reliable information by interacting with real objects, and that they are sources of information that both affect and are affected by the society through their mutual communication. According to Kaschak (2014, p. 108), the museum benefits, especially in citizenship education processes. Museums play an important role in the construction of national identity with the collections they have, as well as the way they present and interpret these collections (McLean 2007, p. 246, Fladmark 2014, p. 13). Museums also support students' civic attitudes and skills, including social responsibility and civic engagement, as an example of on-site learning in this process. Learning in the museum is "learning from objects". The use of collections, artifacts, and samples is one of the countless ways of learning in the museum. Hooper-Greenhill (1999) states that the object acts like a document; it holds and records the information; and not only does it change as we learn more, it also has a capacity to remind us of what we know. An important feature of learning in the museum is improving

thinking skills. In this type of learning, it is possible to reach from concrete to abstract, from known to unknown, and from observation to generalization through senses (Onur 2012, p. 48).

Among the UK's leading toy museums, Pollock Toy Museum, Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, Brighton Toy Museum, and the Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh, Scotland, have detailed museum education books, educational links, and web pages on toys of different themes. The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures in Missouri in the USA organizes daily educational activities for children aged six and over and their families, but the museum does not have an education package. In Germany, thematic studies are carried out using educational packages as well as daily educational activities in examples such as Soltau Toy Museum, Nuremberg Toy Museum, and Freinsheim Historical Toy Museum. The Poissy Toy Museum in France, the Wambrechies Old Toys Museum, and the Toy Museum in Brussels prepare educational packages based on their curricula. Education and theater workshops are prepared at the Tartu Toy Museum in Estonia, and structured trainings are organized based on thematic education sheets. In Japan, Nagoya Spinning Top Museum and Yokohama Tin Toy Museum organize weekends for children and their families and weekdays for students and teachers.

#### *Educational Activities of Ankara University Toy Museum*

The Ankara University Toy Museum has been visited by 75,000 people since its establishment in 1990. The museum works with the mission of "being a child-friendly (family-friendly) museum that focuses on the history of toys and children's culture, offers programs and activities for learning by doing and living, and aims to produce for and with children". In this context, the museum has determined its vision as follows: "Investigation of children's culture with the history of play and toys in Turkey and development of resources required for museumification through contemporary context, and to ensure the sustainability of these resources."

The museum prioritizes audience studies in the process of finding or creating these resources and carries out audience development activities within the scope of museum education. Aiming to use the principles and methods of museum education effectively, the museum's education is planned and implemented under seven headings:

- *Guided museum tours and lectures (different age and interest groups).*
- *Structured (thematic) educational studies at preschool and primary school level.*
- *Teacher's training activities for Museum Education.*
- *Training for Museum Education Master of the Arts students.*
- *Visits of interest groups (adults).*
- *Working areas for researchers.*
- *Visits of researchers (conferences, seminars, congress etc.)*
- *Training for volunteers in a museum.*

- *Maker workshops for students and teachers.*

The "museum volunteering" system in museums in Europe and the USA is carried out by museums or non-governmental organizations themselves. It became the most important driving force of museums in the sustainability process. The Toy Museum also hosts voluntary museum education activities initiated by various non-governmental organizations by providing museum training to volunteer museum educator groups on the School - Museum Days. According to Andresen (2002), a museum volunteer is a person who not only likes to visit museums but also likes to share his/her experiences. Although museum volunteering is a common practice, it is not implemented in a systematic manner in Turkey. Therefore, implementing volunteering as a sustainable strategy in museums will set an example for many cultural institutions that have staff shortages.

The most popular museum educational activity is the maker workshop for students and teachers. The maker movement is a cultural trend that places value on an individual's ability to be a creator of things as well as a consumer of things. In this culture, individuals who create things are called "makers". Makers come from all walks of life, with diverse skill sets and interests. The thing they have in common is creativity, an interest in design as well as access to tools and raw materials that make production possible (Rouse 2014). The Maker Movement consists of the combination of technology and the "do it yourself" culture that has spread rapidly in the last decade. Maker is prepared with contents such as model aircraft making, electronic circuit design, printing or producing various items with 3D printers, jewelry design, and toy making, depending on the activity it is linked to. According to the constructivist approach, which emphasizes that past experiences are important for the individual to make sense of new information, a person can understand new information by integrating her previous knowledge and adding meaning according to herself (Slavin 2014, p. 219). There are many studies investigating how maker experiences in museums shape children's thinking and learning styles (Brahms 2014, Gutwill et al. 2015). These researches are generally descriptive and ethnographic studies conducted by professionals working in various museums and science centers (Bevan et al. 2015).

According to Brahms and Crowley (2017), maker activities are among the most important workshops of out-of-school learning environments. In the first phase of the Ankara University Toy Museum maker event, museum education studies were carried out on the past and future of the toys in the museum, and then children were allowed to design their own toys with the Tinkercad program (Figure 1). They freely designed the toys that they liked and whose history attracted their attention among the toys they saw in the museum, in the same program. During the process, inspired by the museum work, toys such as a washing machine, a double-decker bus, a piggy bank, a robot, a mug cup, a tower, a car, a house, a sword, a castle, an alien, as well as a snowman were designed.

**Figure 1.** *Maker Activity in the Museum, Toy Design and Virtual Museum Tour*

The Ankara University Toy Museum collection exhibition themes are Vehicles/Transportation, Intelligence Games, Music and Entertainment Culture, School Culture, Construction, Home Sweet Home, Babies, Animals, Doll House Set, Street Games, Trains, Tin Toy Collection, Foreign Traditional Dolls, Spacecrafts, Race Cars, Trinkets, Porcelain and Knitted Dolls, Garden and Beach Toys, Stuffed Toys, Objects of Childhood and Cradles. The museum needed an education package in order to provide an enjoyable environment where pre-school and primary school students who visit the museum can increase their skills and capacities, enable them to learn by doing and experiencing, as well as communicating and interacting with their peers. This educational package was prepared for pre-school age groups and primary school 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grades by examining national curricula and education programs. Preschool education activities are planned according to museum themes, taking into account the characteristics of cognitive development, language development, social-emotional development, and motor development in the curriculum. In the National curricula in primary education of 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades, Introduction to Science, Turkish, Mathematics, Geometry, Music, Visual Arts, Art Activities are basic courses. The elective courses in the classroom such as Chess, Physical Education, Sports Activities, Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy, Play and Physical Activities, and Creative Thinking courses are included. In the third year, Science Course was added to these courses. In the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Social Studies was included. In the National curricula, 5<sup>th</sup> grade includes Visual Arts, Math, Science, Social Sciences, Turkish, Art Activities. The contents of these courses are relevant to be conducted in a museum. Activities in museum Education packages are related to 5th grade Social Studies and Visual Arts; 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies and Art Activities; 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies, Technology Design. These lessons are directly related to the concepts and acquisitions of the units that will overlap with the Toy Museum themes.

Especially 5<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grade students are in progress to adulthood. The participation of this age group in museum activities is important in terms of development issues. In adolescence, there are significant changes in the capacity of the individual to be close with their peers. In adolescence, friendships based on clarity, honesty,

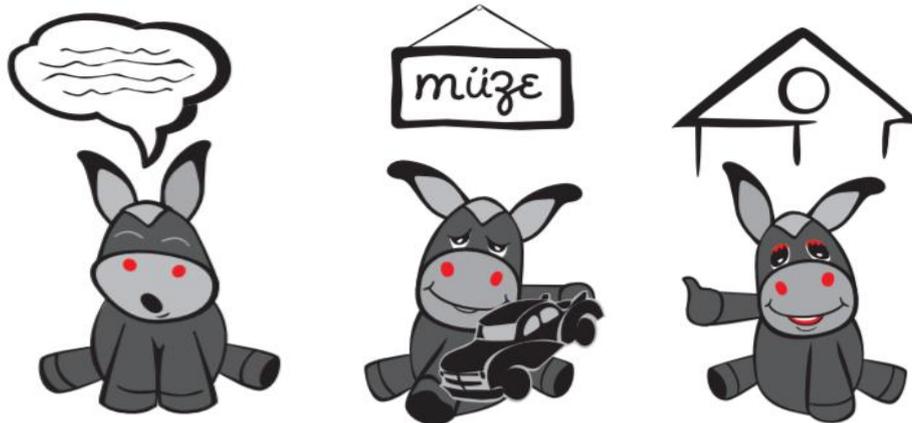
loyalty, and mutual trust emerge rather than simply sharing activities and interests (Steinberg 2013, p. 27). Most important decisions with long-term consequences on school and career issues are made in adolescence. Many of these decisions are based on adolescents' evaluations of their school achievements, their own competencies and capacities, their expectations for the future, and the guidance and suggestions they receive from their parents, teachers, and friends (Steinberg 2013, p. 28).

## Findings and Interpretation

Ankara University Toy Museum has prepared an educational book that will guide preschool teachers in the museum education field in order to implement contemporary museology approaches based on the educational functions of museums. The significance of informal learning environments with the new primary education program and the adoption of learning by doing approaches make the museum an important learning area. The activities prepared in connection with the units in the teaching programs are important in terms of experiencing the toy as an original object. The book contains activities covering how to apply museum education methods, techniques, and activities in the Toy Museum within the Preschool Education Program and the basic skills and concepts that children will participate in education with these activities.

The Preschool Education Book includes the definition of museum education, explanations about the methods and techniques used in museum education, examples of activities, written-visual materials to be used in activities, and evaluation processes. The book is designed to accompany the cartoon character from the Toy Museum collection to guide students (Figures 2 and 3). Education Books also include a Toy Map of Turkey (Figure 4).

**Figure 2.** Stuffed Donkey from Museum Collection to Cartoon Museum Guide



**Figure 3.** Stuffed Donkey, 1970s Made in Turkey, Brand Fatoş



The list of events in the book is presented below:

1. Find the vehicle (Theme: Vehicles/Transportation)
2. Where is the camel? (Theme: Animals)
3. Touch and match (Theme: Play and intelligence)
4. Toys before you – Toys after you? (Theme: Vehicles/Transportation)
5. Once upon a time in a museum (Theme: Vehicles/Transportation)
6. My toy (Theme: Vehicles/Transportation)

**Figure 4.** Toy Map of Turkey



The activities in the Preschool Education Book were implemented with 200 students and the activities were finalized in line with the feedback received by the students (Figure 5). In the context of the activities developed, the following questions were asked to the participants:

1. How much fun did you have at the Toy Museum?
2. Which toy did you like the most during the event at the Toy Museum?

The question "How much fun did you have at the Toy Museum?" was asked in the preschool Education book. Since the students were illiterate, three visual expressions were used and they were asked to paint the expression representing their feelings. It is stated that 94.5% of the students left the museum activity happily. The questions "Which toy did you like the most during the event in the Toy Museum?" and "Can you draw" were also asked to students. 40% of the students answered the dolls, 35% said the vehicles, and 30% emphasized the dollhouse sets.

**Figure 5.** Warm-Up Studies at Pre-Museum Process



The Primary School Museum Education Book, prepared in conjunction with the units in the curriculum, includes how the education will be implemented within the elementary education program in the museum and the basic skills and concepts that are desired to be acquired by children who will participate in education with these activities.

In the Primary School Education Book pages, there is a description of museum education, explanations about the methods and techniques used in museum education, examples of activities, written-visual materials to be used in activities, and evaluation processes. In the Primary School Museum Education Book, the museum collection has been examined in a way that is integrated with the vision and mission of the Toy Museum, and in line with the Primary School Curriculum, the activities have been prepared to cover the pre-museum, museum and post-museum processes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

The list of events in the book is presented below:

1. Home Sweet Home (Unit – My Family and Home – Introduction to Science Course)
2. Toy Collection (Unit – Museum Culture – Art Activities Course)
3. Past-Present-Future (Unit – I Love My Country – Introduction to Science Course)
4. Prisms (Unit - Geometry and Shapes– Math Course/ Geometry Course)
5. Toy Museum (Unit – Feelings in the Museum – Art Activities Course)
6. New Words in Toy Museum (Unit – Word Presence – Turkish Course)
7. Technology and Toy (Unit – Good Thing There is – Social Sciences Course)
8. Find the objects (Unit - Cultural Heritage – Social Sciences Course)
9. Movement of Toys (Unit – Movement of Cultural Assets– Science Courses)
10. Determine the Ribbon (Unit -Time Measuring – Math Course)

The activities in the primary school package were implemented with 200 students and they were finalized in line with the feedback received from the students (Figures 6 and 7). In the context of the activities developed, the following questions were asked to the participants regarding these activities:

1. What are your feelings about the event held at the Toy Museum?
2. Which toy did you like the most at the event you attended at the Toy Museum?
3. Would you like to attend the event you did at the Toy Museum again?
4. What score would you give the Toy Museum and the event?

45.5% of the students participating in the event stated that they were happy with it. 11.5% of them stated that they liked the activity very much, and 10.5% found it very enjoyable. 20% of the students emphasized that the toy museum is a very nice place depending on the activity. 5% of them stated that they were excited about the museum activity; 3% stated that they found the activity instructive. 3 percent of the students stated that they found the museum too tiny and therefore were disappointed.

The expressions about the question "What are your feelings about the event held at the Toy Museum?" are selected from the student responses to the question. They are presented below:

*I have learned how children played in the past. (E.K.9 years)*

*I am really surprised because everything is handmade. (M.K.9 years)*

*Come here please, it reminds the past. (E.T.10 years)*

*I'd like to come if the exhibition changes. (E.Ş.10 years)*

*I did not want to leave here. (A.A.10 years)*

*When I said everything was ok at the museum, I encountered new surprises (İ.B.A.9 years)*

*There was no other floor at th museum but I really liked it. (Y.N.K. 9 years)*

*The museum is tiny but the garden is excellent. (A.S.9 years)*

34% of the students liked the home sets the most during the activities. With this percentage, home sets have become the most popular toy group in the museum. Cars follow the home sets with 30%. 20% of the students stated that they liked construction toys. 17% stated that they liked dolls and 15% liked the trains. While 10 percent of the students stated that they liked all the toys in the museum, it was determined that the least liked toy were the oxen with a rate of 2%. 90% of the students stated that they would like to participate in the activity at the museum again. As the students saw very interesting things; They stated that they wanted to participate in the activities again because they wanted their parents to see them, and they learned a lot in the museum.

The expressions about the question "Would you like to attend the event you attended at the museum again?" are selected from the responses to the question. They are presented below:

*I'd like to come again because I have seen interesting things. (A.K. 8 years)*

*No, I don't want to come here again because it is very tiny. (A.Ç.8 years)*

*I'd like to bring my parents here because they should see the museum. (H.D.Y. 8 years)*

*I'd like to come here again because I learned a lot. (S.Ü.9 years)*

*I liked guiding here. (K.E.9 years)*

*No, I do not want to come here because I want to be famous. (A.B.B. 9 years)*

*I will come here again because I want that place to be famous. (İ.B.A, 9 years)*

**Figure 6.** Educational Activities in the Museum Gallery



The activities in the educational book developed for the secondary school were implemented with 45 students and the activities were finalized in line with the feedback received from the students. In the context of the activities developed, the following questions were asked to the participants:

1. What are your feelings about the event held at the Toy Museum?
2. What did you learn during the event at the Toy Museum?

53% of the students found the activity enjoyable. According to 24% of them, the event was informative. While 11% stated that the event was remarkable, 6 percent stated that this activity made them emotional.

*It was like a store selling old toys, injecting peace, and fun into the human body. (Ö.1.12 years)*

*I like the decoration. (Ö.2.12 years)*

*Of all the museums I visited, this was the one where I had the most fun. (Ö.3.12 years)*

*The forgetting of old toys made me sad. (Ö.5.12 years)*

*Old toys were replaced by new things and the old ones were forgotten. (Ö.6.years)*

29% of the students stated that they learned that the toys produced in the past were more valuable than today's toys. 22% stated that they learned the types of toys and 17% stated that they learned how to use them. 15% of them also stated that they learned the history of toys through activities.

*We have seen that the toys of the past are more valuable and based on handmade tradition. (S.1.12 yaş)*

*I learned how the toys of the past have changed today. (S.2.12 years old)*

*We have seen different toy types. (S.5.12 years)*

*My memories are refreshed. (S.6.12 years)*

*It was interesting to learn about the history of toys. (S.7.9 years old)*

*I learned that toys are produced from different materials. (S.8.10 years old)*

**Figure 7.** Secondary School Educational Activities in the Museum Gallery



## Conclusion

The primary aim of toy museums is conservation play and toy culture. Besides this function, museums are also lifelong educational institutions and they should play a new role in the transfer of historical processes. To fulfill this requirement, some of them are specially designed for children as children's Museums, Museums of childhood, and toy Museums. When the toy is exhibited in the museums, it gives information about both child culture and social and cultural process of the present age and it helps to improve children's learning skills through themed educational activities which are depended on the national curricula.

Although the functionalist and contemporary toy museums are established in Turkey and various training activities are held there, none of them have a training package designed for use by teachers and students. However, it is among the strategies of contemporary toy museums to use the toy as an educational tool not only as an object of nostalgia but as an indicator of social life, technology, and even economic developments. Although these strategies are not implemented in all toy museums, today it is known that many of them include education, participation and promotion activities, and develop learning materials. Therefore, the Ankara University Toy Museum is also in an effort to develop a training package based on similar contemporary museum strategies. Therefore, as the third step of the research, the lectures in the education program are prepared by the Ministry of National Education Board. That's why a museum education package has been prepared to ensure effective use of the museum for primary school students from 1st to 4<sup>th</sup> grades, for secondary school students from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades, and for their teachers. The package has been prepared to ensure effective use of the museum and has been developed based on the collection of the Ankara University Toy Museum.

In the museum, there are nearly 3,000 toys consisting of approximately thirty themes such as school culture, street games and spacecrafts. The richness of the collection provides the opportunity to develop museum education activities that can appeal to people and subjects from many different fields.

With this training package, it was tried to create a guide on how teachers can use the Toy Museum for educational purposes. This study is a source for other toy museums in Turkey. Researchers and teachers can create a different number of museum education activities suitable for each lesson and unit based on the themes in the museum. Other toy museums take the education packages prepared in this research as an example; they can prepare similar museum education packages for families, children of different age groups, disabled groups, elder people, and disadvantaged groups that can be used by museum educators and teachers.

Based on this determination, the following recommendations have been developed for teachers, Museums educators and museum staff:

- 1) This package is a sample for preschool, primary school, and secondary school teachers, museum educators and so on. It is a sample of how students can use the museum as an educational environment with a contemporary understanding of museology.

- 2) This package can be applied to elective museum education undergraduate courses in different departments.
- 3) The Ankara University Toy Museum can reach children who cannot reach the museum, who are outside the borders of Ankara, with museum activities, promotional information, and museum loan boxes.
- 4) Visitors who cannot reach the museum can access the museum via the website with the virtual museum application.
- 5) The number of visitors can be increased by promoting the museum on social media (Figure 8).
- 6) The relevant package can be shared with the Ministry of National Education and introduced to teachers within the scope of in-service training.

**Figure 8.** *Museum Education Books are Shared on the Website of the Ankara University Toy Museum*



Source: <http://cokaum.ankara.edu.tr/oyuncak-muzesi>.

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## **Indonesian Female Peacekeepers Participation in United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) during 2015–2017**

*By Gede Sumertha<sup>\*</sup>, Herlina Juni Risma Saragih<sup>±</sup> & Sarah Astried<sup>‡</sup>*

*This research is constructed in order to study and to analyze Indonesian female peacekeepers participation in United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) during 2015–2017. The research is using qualitative methods and mechanisms and data were collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation studies. The results of the research indicated that Indonesian female peacekeepers participation in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was increasing to deploy every year, but still had limited involvement in United Nations (UN) mission due to some obstacles on recruiting, and posting in area operation.*

**Keywords:** *female peacekeepers, United Nations, peacekeeping mission, Indonesia, UNIFIL*

### **Introduction**

United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission is collective action committed to preserve world peace and security (United Nations 2008, p. 24). It involves various forces including military, police, and civilian. Following its development, the UN also put their concern on gender perspective in the peacekeeping missions. It is reflected on the adoption of UNSC Resolution No. 1325 Year 2000 regarding Women, Peace and Security. The resolution signified that gender perspective in peacekeeping mission is something essential considering multidimensional impact at the conflicting area. It encouraged UN Member States to increase female participation in the peacekeeping missions which focused on participation, protection, assistance, and recovery (Geuskens 2014).

The paper focuses on participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers especially in the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) year 2015-2017. Indonesian female peacekeepers in this regard are as military officers and troops. Thus, the paper addresses a research questions on "how is the participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL year 2015-2017?" We aim to analyze the participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL at the above period considering Indonesia as the top ten of biggest troops contributing country (United Nations 2018). It is necessary whether the participation already put gender perspective or not.

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In general, Indonesia's participation in the peacekeeping mission has started since 1957 by sending troops for United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in Sinai, Egypt (PMPP TNI 2011, p. 3). However, the first female deployment was officially sent in 2008 for United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Indonesia's contribution in the peacekeeping mission was mandated in Indonesia's Constitution at the Preamble article which stated that Indonesia will commit to participate in world peace and security. It is also in line with the principle of Indonesia's "*bebas aktif*" (independent and active) foreign policy that upholds state's sovereignty, thus, also implement non-intervention principle.

The paper focuses on participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers especially in the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) year 2015–2017. Thus, the paper addresses a research questions on "how is the participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL year 2015–2017?" The aim of the research, to analyze the participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL at the above period considering Indonesia as the top ten of biggest troops contributing country (United Nations 2018). It is necessary whether the participation already put gender perspective or not.

Further, Indonesia was holding vision of 4,000 peacekeepers that shall be achieved in period of 2015-2019 (Capie 2016). Fortunately, to accomplish this mission, Indonesia has established a special team to coordinate related to Indonesia's contribution in UN peacekeeping operations. The team was established in 2011 based on Presidential Regulation No. 85, namely TKMPP (Coordinate Team for Peacekeeping Mission/*Tim Koordinasi Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian*). The team consisted of eight Ministries and state institution with Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Officer in Charge and Ministry of Defense as the Member. They coordinate regularly for once a month on every detail of Indonesia's contribution to the UN Peacekeeping missions as well as to consider how Indonesia will participate, how to increase and anticipate the participation considering the actual strategic environment at the mission area. Regarding this vision, Indonesian female peacekeepers are also the part to participate. Moreover, operationally, Indonesia has established PMPP-TNI (Indonesia National Defense Peacekeeping Forces Center/*Pusat Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian-Tentara Nasional Indonesia*) who responsible for the preparation of Indonesia's participation started from recruitment process, pre-deployment training, the departure, until the forces are back to Indonesia (PMPP TNI 2011, p. 235). TKMPP and PMPP-TNI are coordinating to set and implement the strategy of peacekeeping forces deployment, including to South Lebanon.

The reason for choosing UNIFIL is because the biggest female peacekeepers were deployed by Indonesia in South Lebanon. 2015 was selected as the starting point of this research considering the first year of Indonesian vision of 4,000 peacekeepers while 2017 is the final period that signified the role of Indonesian female peacekeeper in community outreach activity.

The outline of this paper is started with introduction and followed with literature review of participation, concept of UN peacekeeping mission and gender mainstreaming. Then, the research methodology is outlined to cover our research

design, data collection and analysis. Our findings are discussed in four areas including preparation stage, obstacles, female in quantity and activities. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are drawn.

## **Participation**

Cohen and Uphoff (1980) revealed that participation is not merely something that can be calculated in quantity (Cohen and Uphoff 1980). It is whole aspects that involved in the participation itself such as the individual/actor, process, and other features that support the process. They mentioned that participation is divided into 4 main types; 1) Participation in decision making, 2) Participation in implementation, 3) Participation in benefits, and 4) Participation in evaluation (Cohen and Uphoff 1980). The involvement of someone in formulating alternative policies or giving consideration for a certain issue could be identified as participation in decision making, but not limited to those activities. In kind of participation in implementation, it is more about the utilization of resources to run a program, policy or others. While in kind of benefits, participation refers to some kinds of involvement that are seen from the output or result that are going to be obtained or about the percentage of success. Finally, participation in evaluation means that contribution to assess the implementation of program.

Not limited to perspective from Cohen and Uphoff, Arnstein presented about eight levels of citizen participation. It explained the degree of participation start from non-participation, degrees of tokenism, and degree of citizen power as the highest level. The eight levels are: 1) Manipulation, 2) Therapy, 3) Informing, 4) Consultation, 5) Placation, 6) Partnership, 7) Delegated Power, and 8) Citizen control (Norad 2013). This research focused on participation explained by Cohen and Uphoff. To identify the participation, some aspects are needed to be concerned such as actors, objectives, available information, and the output of participation.

## **UN Peacekeeping Mission**

UN peacekeeping mission is part of United Nations which carried out a mandate to help countries torn by conflict in creating peace conditions (United Nations 2012, pp. 10–20). The UN has started the peacekeeping mission since 1948 but the creation of special department of peacekeeping operations (DPKO) was made in 1992. Those activities related to peacekeeping operations are Security Council's responsibility since they have primary concern for ensuring international peace and security.

UN peacekeeping missions are implemented based on three basic principle, they are: 1) Consent of the parties, 2) Impartiality, and 3) Non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate (United Nations 2008, pp. 31–40). The mission can only be done by obtaining consent/permission from the conflicting parties. Peacekeeping forces also have no standing position to all conflicting

parties. Lastly, the use of force is only allowed under defense conditions and under official mandate from Security Council.

The UN has no standing military or police forces of its own. They are coming from member states contribution for each operation. In running the mission, peacekeepers are not only military forces but also police and civilian. The UN admitted the important role of civilians in the peacekeeping operations to support confidence building, conflict management, negotiation and reconciliation (United Nations 2012). This research captured Indonesian military forces in the mission.

### **Gender Mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming is main global strategy that created to promote gender equality (United Nations 2002, pp. v–vii). It was discussed in the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. In its development, ECOSOC adopted resolution of gender mainstreaming in 2001 when the discussion has conducted in the General Assembly of 2000. ECOSOC define gender mainstreaming as:

"...the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." (United Nations 2002)

Gender mainstreaming does not mean to establish a separate project between male and female. It is more about integrated part from all of activities and promotes equal opportunities (Schouten and Dunham 2012). This concept has already adapted as well to the UN Security Council through resolution number 1325 on October 2000 which also gave a concern to gender perspective in peacekeeping operations. In 2006, DPKO has published directive policy related to gender equality in peacekeeping mission to ensure gender perspective in each policy and activities including structure of organization, resources, and budget (Pramasatya 2015). It cannot be achieved without institutional commitment to implement.

### **Methodology**

The research was conducted in qualitative study between July-December 2018 by using interview as one of the instruments. A total of 5 state ministries and/or institutions in Jakarta and Bogor who played substantial role in Indonesia's contribution in UN Peacekeeping were selected by the research team. 13 participants were interviewed with purposive sampling. All interviews were conducted directly (face to face) and digitally recorded with consent of the interviewees. List of questions is provided for guiding the interviews but still open

for further discussion. Thus, we used semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. During the visit to official state institutions, data related to Indonesian peacekeepers record were also obtained. They provided quantity of Indonesian peacekeepers per year and classified based on the missions.

Apart from the interviews, public and institutions' documents as well as official website information are collected as necessary. Finally, the collected data are verified through triangulation. As explained by Miles and Huberman, triangulation is necessary to support the data validity check (Miles et al. 2014). In this regard, the research used triangulation of sources and methods to verify the obtained information. Further, the data collections were analyzed by interactive model which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusions. Data was selected, focused, and simplified. Then, it displayed in various type such as text, table, and figure. After an interactive process, it came to the conclusion of the research.

### **Peacekeeping Forces Preparation**

The preparation stage to send Indonesian female peacekeepers is started from recruitment, training and deployment. The implementation of peacekeeping operations is enshrined in Indonesia National Defense Commander Regulation Number Per pang/80/XII/2009. The process involved three leading actors; they are Indonesia National Defense Headquarter (*Markas Besar TNI*), Force Headquarters, and Indonesia National Defense Forces Peacekeeping Center (*Pusat Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian Tentara Nasional Indonesia – PMPP TNI*). In the preparation process, peacekeeping center is holding socialization to disseminate information concerning peacekeeping mission including general task and function, evaluation from the previous contribution, and selection process that will be taken forward. The socialization is done right after the issuance of official directive letter about recruitment from Indonesia National Defense Headquarter. Unfortunately, it is only socialized to the army forces as the main body in Task Force of Mechanic Infantry and Combat Battalion (PMPP TNI 2011, p. 238).

As the selection process, military forces both male and female must follow the tests such as medical fitness (mental and physical), English capability based on military ranks/position and kind of individual assignment, driving capability, and ability to operate computer. In an interview with Vice Commander of PMPP TNI, he confirmed that all the selection processes are conducted without any differentiation between male and female, they follow all terms and conditions.

However, to recruit more female, Indonesia is still facing some difficulties. It cannot be denied that masculine perspective still dominated military world (Lopes 2011, p. 2). Married females are still associated with domestic affairs such as managing household, taking care children and husband. Meanwhile, peacekeeping mission also need female contribution since the development of peacekeeping operations (United Nations 2008, p. 24). Victims of conflict are diverse with different sex, needs, and impact experiences. Gender-based violence was also happened to the victims in conflicting area including rape (United Nations 2003, p.

1). Indonesian female peacekeeper, in an interview with the author, conveyed that female victims or ex-combatants tend to be reluctant to share information or their own experience with male forces because they might not comfort with. Therefore, women and girls in conflict area are needing certain approach to be embraced and empowered. The interview with representative of Officer in Charge for TKMPP revealed that Indonesia have many female peacekeepers who are interested to join the mission. Therefore, he suggested to create pool of candidate for those interested to be female peacekeepers and continue with capabilities injection to support their preparation. Through that way, he expected that Indonesian female peacekeepers could give contribution in strategic/substantial position in the mission, not only as a troop.

### **Obstacles in Recruiting More Indonesian Female Peacekeepers**

Individual capacity is not a major reason to the limited participation of Indonesian Female Peacekeepers. Previously, language capacity of female forces was assumed as the main reason of limited participation. Most of candidates are failed when it comes to language selection. PMPP TNI confirmed that they have informed this requirement prior to the selection so that every candidate able to prepare their capability. An interview with a Researcher of Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Indonesia conveyed that the problem of UN language capability could be solved through early training.<sup>1</sup> However, female officer in Indonesia air force confirmed that early training for languages is not provided by PMPP TNI but through separate programs in each Indonesia National Defense Forces (TNI). The training is also not provided specifically for peacekeeping preparation rather to support military forces in running their assignment.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from language capability, the limited participation of Indonesian Female Peacekeepers is more likely happened due to the limited quantity of female in Indonesia National Defense Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*). According to Director of International Security and Disarmament (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) the quantity of female military forces in Indonesia is about 3–4% (Anya 2018). It gave logical consequences into the reluctance of senior military officers to permit their female officers in joining peacekeeping selection. In an interview with Vice Commander of PMPP TNI, female officers are needed in some districts to deal with job position as assigned for them. He told that the job might impossible to be replaced by other staff or alternatively required to employ other females from other corps/districts. When females are following the selection stages, it means that females will leave their position for temporary and it becomes concern for some of senior military officers. However, he also said that some military officers are very supportive for their females. These conditions led us to the assumption that this military world is still giving certain constrain to female in order to empower their self and gain better career achievement. Masculinism is enshrined

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Fitri Bintang Timur in Jakarta, Indonesia, 14 September 2018.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Major Nani Kusmiyati in Jakarta, Indonesia, 25 November 2018.

in the military world, including in Indonesia. Some perceptions are arising about female participation, senior officer experienced that military operations are more complicated with female involvement. They would find different routines, needs, and approach with male forces. In line with this perception, authors found that some senior officers might not too familiar on how to treat female forces in their group with kind of character and need differences.

Moreover, the obstacles not only coming from the limited number of female forces but also condition that given by the institution which obligated female to get written permission/consent from husband (PMPP TNI 2011). This is unique condition in Indonesia and not specifically regulated by the United Nations. Vice Commander of PMPP-TNI confirmed that this condition is essential since female (mainly the married female) is the biggest support system in family for taking care children and to be a housewife. This is Indonesian value that still creates a concern for stakeholders in preparing female peacekeepers. The interview with Indonesian female peacekeepers revealed that military females are lucky if the husband is kind of supportive partner or understand about military activities. It would support females to develop their career, to get new experiences, and to give contribution in the mission as well as for Indonesia. An investigation showed that military requirement in this matter is different with Indonesian Women Police. As per interview session with Indonesian Police Officer (2018), she said that Indonesian Female Police do not have to submit written permission/consent from husband. This different policy might need further discussion in military institution to find alternative that not violate Indonesian values in employing female peacekeeper to UN Mission, including UNIFIL.

### Quantity of Indonesian Female Peacekeepers in UNIFIL 2015–2017

Apart from the above-mentioned obstacles, the quantity of Indonesian female peacekeepers was increasing annually in a gradual stage. In 2015, 23 out of 29 Indonesian female peacekeepers are deployed to UNIFIL. It increased about 26% from previous deployment to UNIFIL became 29 female peacekeepers. Slowly, it increased again in 2017 became 48 female peacekeepers (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** *Quantity of Indonesian Female Peacekeepers in UNIFIL 2015–2017*



As of 2015–2017, 100 out of 134 Indonesian female peacekeepers are deployed to UNIFIL. It signifies more than 50% of them are selected to be posted in South Lebanon. It was deployed with some considerations. In an interview with female army, Major Erna Nuraeni, mentioned that UNIFIL is a "relative" safe mission<sup>3</sup>. It cannot be categorized as totally "safe mission" because the situation might be changing surprisingly. As per implementation report prepared by one of Indonesian female peacekeeper by 2016, there were some highlighted incidents in Lebanon such as mass demonstration, road blocking by society, internal conflict in Ain El-Hilweh refugees camp, suicide bomb attack in Beirut, rocket launching from South Lebanon to Israel and its counterattack, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) bomb attack, etc.

PMPP TNI admitted that they also consider security factor in the mission for female deployment. From the above increasing number of Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL 2015–2017, it needs to find whether they are employed in substantial position or still in supporting unit under the mission. Substantial position in this matter means they are in military observer and military staff. After done a research about Indonesian female peacekeeper in UNIFIL 2015–2017, it was found that most of Indonesian female peacekeepers are posted as the Contingent troops and small number in the military staff position.

### **Positions of Indonesian Female Peacekeepers in UNIFIL 2015–2017**

Military contributions in the peacekeeping operations are divided into three main components: Military Observer, Military staff, and Contingent troops (United Nations 2006, pp. 2–3). Specific for the UNIFIL, participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers can be seen in those components except military observer. Indonesia in UNIFIL mission has no military observer representative since Indonesia has no diplomatic relations with Israel. However, Indonesian female peacekeepers have stepped their role in military observer for Monusco in Congo. Indonesian female air force, Major Ratih Pusparini, was one of them. She was the first female peacekeeper deployed by Indonesia in 2008<sup>4</sup>. Her contribution to the mission was a milestone for Indonesia since she able to survive in a small team with different countries, different region compared to contingent, different cultures, and even with special tasks as an observer. She was the only one female in a team that consisted of six personnel. Her active contributions realized her awareness and understanding that female contribution is highly needed in conflict area. Females are needed to open an access to create a gender-friendly mission, get some information such as sexual violations, women and children needs, and some stories that could not be told to male forces (Allison 2015).

Moreover, as an Indonesian female, the inherent culture is to be friendly force. This is one of the reasons why Indonesian peacekeepers, including females, are one of local society favorites. To be a military observer means that they have more capacity either in language proficiency, military analysis, and mental

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<sup>3</sup>Interview with Major Erna Nuraeni in Jakarta, Indonesia, 12 September 2018.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ratih Pusparini in Jakarta, Indonesia, 6 September 2018.

strength.<sup>5</sup> Generally, they are military personnel who at least ranked in Captain or Major. Their experience is needed considering they have to do some activities such as foot patrol, collecting information, observation, monitoring, analysis, and reporting the socio-economy as well as security situation in the Area of Responsibilities. Unfortunately, position of military observer for Indonesian female has been vacuumed since the last deployment of 2010<sup>6</sup>. According to an interview, it was happened due to this position is assumed as dangerous field for female. Vice Commander of PMPP TNI also confirmed that it was adjusted with requests from the UN. After that period, Indonesia never sent female military observer anymore and started to send again by 2018 to Congo. TKMPP considered that they will deploy more female if personnel meet the UN requirements and pass all the selection process. However, Indonesia's commitment to increase female participation shall be followed by some early actions to prepare female, not only by encouraging female through motivations and limited socialization.

Apart from that, Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL are posted in two military components; these are military staff and contingent. Technically, military staff is part of Contingent, but they work individually either in force headquarters or other special position that integrated with civilians' staff. Different with military staff, Contingent troops work in group for vary units such as infantry, aviation, engineers, so on. In UNIFIL, as of 2015–2017, Indonesian female peacekeepers in Contingent are posted in Mechanic Battalion Task Force, FHQSU (Force Headquarter Support Unit), MPU (Military Police Unit), FPC (Force Protector Company), MCOU (Military Community Outreach Unit), and Level II Hospital. Based on data acquired from PMPP TNI as of September 2018, during the above-mentioned period, distribution of Indonesian female peacekeepers position in Contingent is as follows (Figure 2).

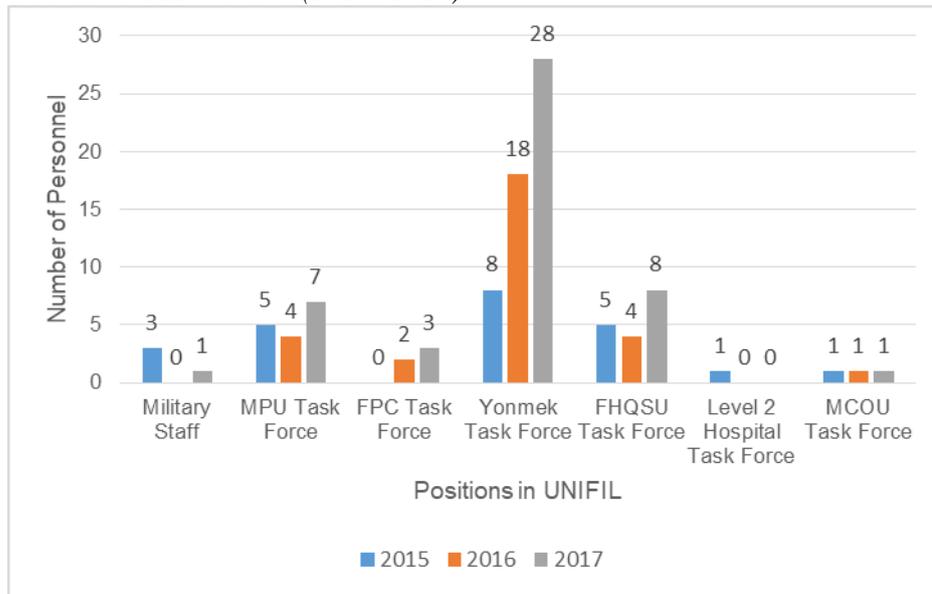
Representative of TKMPP Officer in Charge in an interview with author confirmed that Indonesia intended to focus in increasing female participation as military observer and military staff. Both positions are important as requested by the United Nations to all of UN Member States in achieving 15% gender target for military in peacekeeping. Military institutions need to take some actions forward, not only encourage their female officers but also provide real supports include education and gender policy. Indonesia still has no gender policy that clearly state regarding its contribution to the peacekeeping. The institutions still focus on the number to achieve 4,000 peacekeepers but not supported by gender policy. In reference to UNSC Resolution No. 1325 year 2000, Indonesia attempted to actualize it in stages despite total implementation. Difficulties to recruit more female shall be overcome through mindset improvement. It would be hard if masculine perspective still dominates the military world. Therefore, to talk about female as first commander and other strategic position is still something that needs serious strategy and policy for Indonesia.

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<sup>5</sup>Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ratih Pusparini in Jakarta, Indonesia, 6 September 2018.

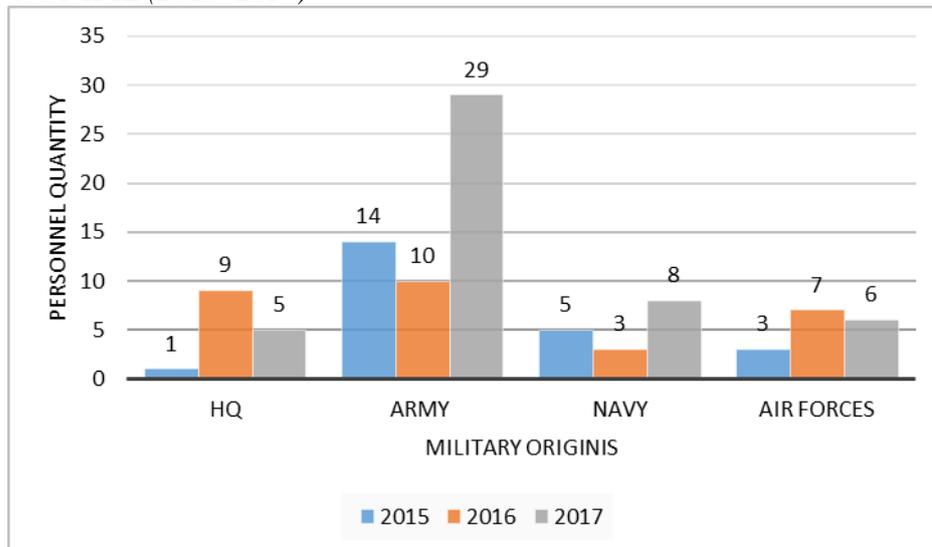
<sup>6</sup>Interview with Colonel Aldrin Petrus Mongan in Bogor, Indonesia, 3 October 2018.

**Figure 2.** Distribution of Indonesian Female Peacekeepers Position in Contingent under UNIFIL Mission (2015–2017)



Indonesian contribution in UNIFIL is unique realizing that military forces either from army, navy, and air forces are present in the mission. It was confirmed by Head of Section for Peaceful Mission, Ministry of Defense that complete military districts does not always happened in every UN Mission. As of 2015–2017, the composition of military origins for Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL can be seen in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** Composition of Military Districts for Indonesian Female Peacekeepers in UNIFIL (2015–2017)



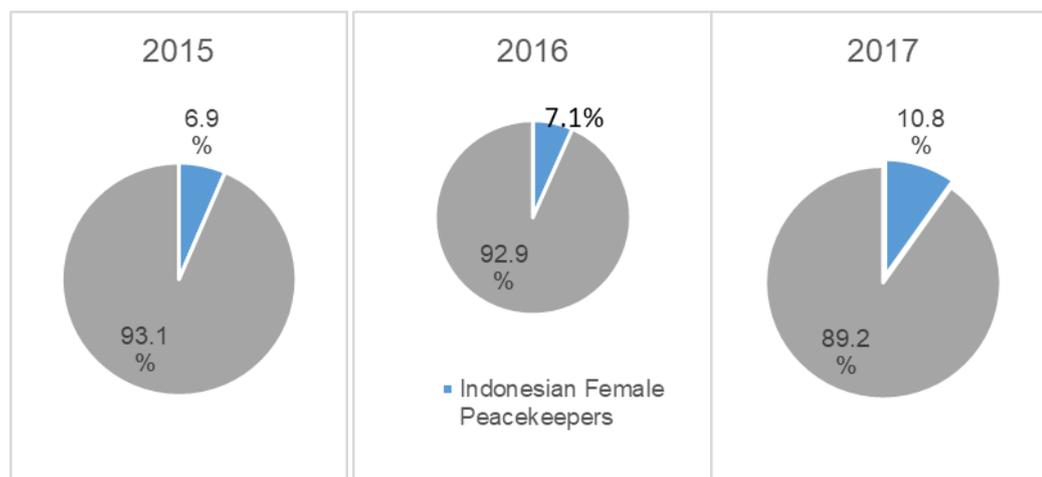
Army forces are dominating the composition. However, Vice Commander of Indonesia National Defense Force Peacekeeping Center clarified that it was just

adjusted with the position requirements and it did not mean to give a privilege for army forces. From the above picture (Figure 3), it is obtained that the comparison ratio is 53:16:16 for army, navy, and air forces consecutively. As the quantity of Indonesian female peacekeepers is increasing in Lebanon, Indonesia is also the third biggest contributing country in sending female peacekeeper after Ghana and France. The proportion compared with global TCC in UNIFIL can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 4.

**Table 1.** *Percentage of Indonesia's Contribution (Female) Compared with Global TCC in UNIFIL (Female)*

Subject	2015	2016	2017
Total of UNIFIL Female Peacekeepers	334	408	444
Indonesian Female Peacekeepers	23	29	48
Percentage of Contribution	6.9%	7.1%	10.8%

**Figure 4.** *Proportion of Indonesian Female Peacekeepers in the Global TCC in UNIFIL*



### Female Activities in Peacekeeping

Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL worked mandatory under UNSC Resolution No. 1701. Their activities are associated with their position and job assignment. From distribution of position, four activities can be highlighted for Indonesian female peacekeepers. They are about Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC), Military Outreach, Medic, and Logistic affairs. In an interview with Indonesian female peacekeepers, the presence of female in local society is more accepted, females able to open an access of information especially for victims of gender-based violence. Moreover, females are also able to give a certain support to empower other females (women and girls) and finally to create a gender-friendly mission. Therefore, it is expected that the mission could bring an inclusive and sustainable peace.

In the development of gender perspective in peacekeeping, UNIFIL has newly established special team consisted of 21 female peacekeepers both from civilian and uniformed forces in 2016. The special team is "Female Assessment/Analysis and Support Team" (FAST) (UNIFIL 2016). The team is trained and called from UNIFIL Contingent to support female existence in various sensitive and cultural situations. In UNIFIL itself, representation of uniformed female peacekeepers is only 3% and there are some military units and battalion which has no female personnel at all. FAST was established to provide an opportunity/open access for local women community to have a consultation with UNIFIL and to become an inclusive mission with regards to safety and security perspective. Indonesian female peacekeepers are part of this special team. While the first all-female patrol was done in 2017 by 6 personnel from Ghana, Ireland, Italia, South Korea, Malaysia and Netherlands, Indonesia is not the first time who involved in the first all-female patrol (Badereddine and Ezzeddine 2018). However, it signifies that the mission has tried to embrace gender perspective and Indonesian female peacekeeper would be part of it while waiting for its turn.

Further, in term of military outreach program, Indonesian female peacekeeper was selected to be a spoke person in the program of community outreach (MCOU) in 2017. First Sergeant Etikasari visited public school in Aytarun with other UNIFIL peacekeepers including two personnel from Indonesia Head Sergeant Dian Rosdiana and Eliana as translator. FS Etikasari explained about Blue Line to the students and it was presented in an interactive way to attract the students (O'Sullivan 2017). This program is important to educate students regarding safety along the blue line in order to prevent violation of the UNSC resolution 1701.

The participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers also can be seen in medical and logistic affairs. In medical for example, Indonesian female peacekeeper concerned to the hygiene of mission area in Naqoura<sup>7</sup>. An interview with female army (2018) confirmed that she and her medical team helped to ensure good sanitation in order to provide convenience and hygiene environment. While in logistic affairs, Indonesian female peacekeeper helped to manage logistic supports started from accepting weekly report from each sector in UNIFIL regarding logistic, reviewing all activities and problems related to Mission Support Center Operations/Logistics Matters, coordinating and monitoring the movement convoy, coordinating with other supporting units, until reporting all the programs/activities (Nuraeni 2016). From those activities, Indonesian female peacekeepers indicated an extensive interaction with fellow personnel in Contingent, other personnel from different countries, and local community. It has to be one of the ways to ensure the world that Indonesia committed to actively participate in sustainable peace.

Those activities were in line with three types of participation mentioned by Cohen and Uphoff (1980); these are participation in implementation, benefits, and evaluation. The participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers positively supported the implementation of task both under contingent and military staff. The research found that its participation was showing resource contributions as an international worker and contribute to the dissemination of information. In term of

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<sup>7</sup>Interview with Major Sarah Tidar in Bogor, Indonesia, 20 September 2018.

worker, Indonesian female peacekeepers were embedded to UN standard of procedures and administration routines that should be reported in daily, weekly and monthly. The procedures were important for their reference to follow up a certain condition at the mission and to make sure their safety and security during the mission. Then, in term of dissemination of information, Indonesian female peacekeepers have visited some public places to provide information related to the mission. It helped society to be aware of actual situation and condition, blue line function and restrictions, as well as traffic safety.

Participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers was also relevant to the term of benefits. Cohen and Uphoff (1980) stated that it can be seen in three areas such as material, social, and personal. Material benefits were obtained since female peacekeepers were also paid by the United Nations. Participation of Indonesian female peacekeepers in UNIFIL also could not be separated with their contribution in opening an access for health services, education and information. Local society appreciated the present of female peacekeepers in raising their awareness and keeping the peace conditions in a peaceful means. Further, benefits also obtained personally for Indonesian female peacekeepers. In the interview with female peacekeepers, they confirmed that they had a great opportunity to be "representative" of United Nations and Indonesia to collaborate and cooperate with other military and civil components in the mission. Through that opportunity, females are trained to respect cultures differences. A mission also trained females personally to be well manage, familiar with UN bodies, and had an experience to use international standard' equipment either information communication technology or the transportation. At the field, females stayed with other forces from different countries which at least made them frequently listen to different languages. In UNIFIL itself, apart from English, Arabic was also common to listen and learn.

Lastly, after females completed their task and backed to Indonesia, they contribute to evaluate the implementation of Indonesia's contribution at the mission. The research did not find prominent obstacles that hampered the implementation of tasks. However, it was noted during the interview with Indonesian female peacekeepers that delayed hand over among the staff was something that affected the new staff/troops had to find out their task's descriptions by their self. PMPP TNI conveyed that the delay was happened due to rotation problem and some administration matters that need to be arranged. They also expect that Indonesia could increase the quantity of female peacekeepers. Thus, Indonesia's participation could support the gender balance strategy.

## **Conclusion**

Indonesian female peacekeepers participation in UNIFIL for the period of 2015–2017, was increasing in quantity every year. The total number of female peacekeepers deployed in UN mission during 2015–2017 was 134, and 100 personnel were deployed in Lebanon (UNIFIL). This quantity represented 74.6% of Indonesian female distribution around the world by 2015–2017. However, the

number of Indonesian female peacekeepers was still limited in supporting UN mission. There were some obstacles in recruitment, mostly posted in Contingent and a small number in Headquarter, as military staff under various supporting unit activities, such as CIMIC, Community Outreach, Medical and Logistic affairs. Therefore, it needs to be considered a strategic policy related to female participation to support Indonesia's contribution in peacekeeping operations.

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## Illegal Migration in Tunisian Rap

By Mohamed Chamekh\*

*This article explores illegal migration through Tunisian rap. It considers this music an aspect of resistance and protest against the socio-economic and political conditions obliging thousands of Tunisians to cross the Mediterranean in makeshift boats in search of better prospects and challenging the increasing security and legislative measures crippling mobility imposed by the EU and Tunisian authorities. This article contends that harga songs document the history of the working class in Tunisia and carve the identity of harraga as people who have been marginalised for generations. It concludes that EU-Tunisia security talks and dialogues remain ineffective as long as the root causes of illegal migration have not been addressed.*

**Keywords:** *illegal migration, Tunisian rap, resistance, marginalization, security, immobility, identity*

### Introduction

Illegal migration is neither a new phenomenon nor a place specific issue. Whether in the Americas, Asia, Africa, or Europe, illegal migration is the order of the day, and despite the fact that the closing decade of the twentieth century was considered the ‘age of migration’ (Castles and Miller 1993) the twenty first century appears to be the century of illegal migration by excellence. This phenomenon is commonly referred to in Tunisia and in Maghrebi countries as *harga*. This word translates into Arabic as ‘burning’ and refers to the clandestine migration to Europe. It started with the ‘burning’ of Visas which refers to travelling to Europe on a tourist visa and staying there illegally. However, in recent years, *harga* has been used to refer to the clandestine migration to Europe in makeshift boats and the derivative *harraga* to the people engaged in this act, the illegal migrants.

The growing number of *harraga* led to growth of artistic and cultural production which documented this experience (*harga*). For example, the Tunisian film producer, Sarra Labidi, documented in her film *Benzin* (Petrol), the experience of a Tunisian IT graduate, from Gabes (a Town on the south eastern coast of Tunisia), who crossed the Mediterranean in a makeshift boat in search of better economic prospects, but was forced to return to Tunisia to sell smuggled petrol. The film epitomises the tragic experience of Tunisian families who lost their children in the Mediterranean Sea. In Algeria, Merzak Alouache, Algerian film producer, traced the journey of the Algerian *harraga* to Europe and illustrated the lost hopes of Algerian youth. Quite interesting, in Zarzis, a small town on the south eastern coast of Tunisia and a major departure point of *harraga*, a museum

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was established to document the memories of *harraga* by displaying some of the belongings they left behind (letters, clothes, shoes...etc). However, music remains the main cultural and artistic artefact which literally describes the plight of *harraga*. In this regard, a plethora of songs emerged as a history from below which delineates different aspects of *harraga*. These songs bring to the fore issues which were left on the margins in mainstream media and official history. Different music genres, in particular *rai*, rap and *mizwid*<sup>8</sup> focused on various aspects of *harraga* mainly nostalgia, estrangement, the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea, death and the deteriorating socio-economic conditions at home.

Music has come to be the focus of studies documenting and shaping socio-economic and political problems in Arab countries. Most of these works emerged after 2011 and explored the role of music in shaping change in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon... (Swedenburg 2012, McDonald 2019). For example, LeVine (2011, 2012) analysed the subversive cultural and political role of heavy metal which threatened the existence of autocratic regimes in the Middle East. According to LeVine, music scenes constituted a reversal of what was considered the commodification of art as these 'subcultural performances' played a liberating role for the marginalised groups in the Middle East. Other works, specific to the Tunisian context, focused on the role of rap songs in mobilising people during the Tunisian Revolution (Bouzouita 2013, Ovshieva 2013, Gana 2012, Barone 2016) and on the way music was used to articulate the grievances of the Tunisian working class mainly in the mining basin (Chamekh 2020).

More specific to this article is the work of Monika Salzbrunn, Farida Souiah, and Simon Mastrangelo (2017, 2019) on Tunisian and Algerian music. They described illegal migration to Europe both as an avenue for opportunity and as a source of 'disillusion'. The same authors explored the world of illegal migrants through Tunisian popular music and found it mired in loneliness, pain, danger and submission to Providence. It is interesting to note in this context that most of the studies on illegal migration focused on the condition of illegal immigrants in host countries, in particular the issue of integration, alienation and exile (Ketz 2016, Demerdash 2016, Tarr, 2019). This article, however, starts with the world of illegal migrants at home. It is in keeping with Sayad Abdelmalek's perception of the study of immigration, which stressed the need to start the study of immigration at home. In this context, he considered studies which do not start with the phenomenon of immigration at home as being limited and partial. In his words, 'by completely reconstructing the trajectories of the emigrants, it becomes possible to grasp the conditions which led to their departure and which produced a certain type of collective attitude towards emigration' (Abdelmalek 1977). Reiterating the same point posthumously, Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000) stated that the study of 'migration must ... start, not from the receiving society, but from the structure and contradictions of the sending communities.' In this context, this essay is focused on one type of *harraga* songs, namely those focused on the push factors which make thousands of Tunisians, especially young Tunisians, to cross the Mediterranean

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<sup>8</sup>*Mizwid* is a Tunisian popular music with instruments consisting of a bagpipe (from goat skin) and *tabla* (percussion).

Sea in search of better prospects. In the course of this article, illegal migration prompted a visit to Tunisia by the Italian Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese to discuss with the Tunisian President, Kais Saïd, the spike in the number of *harraga* reaching the Italian Island of Lampedusa (TAP 2020). Lamorgese pointed in her meeting with President Saïd that 11,191 migrants arrived to Italy this year, almost half of them were Tunisians (Associated Press 2020).

This paper uses Tunisian rap songs to study *harga*. This phenomenon is treated in this article from a cultural perspective. Special emphasis is laid on the way *harga* songs are used as resistance to the deteriorating socio-economic and political conditions at home, which make thousands of Tunisians embark on a journey fraught with danger, and which made of the Mediterranean Sea a crucible of death; more than 2,160 died on their way to Europe in 2018 (Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals 2018). This article is focused on the category of *harraga* as a marginalised group. It is done in a history from below fashion, looking at the marginalised and the way they use art to craft their own narrative and, therefore their history, especially as they were largely left on the margins in official narratives. It is in line with what Street (2003) considered the connections between popular music and politics. In this case, the way marginal groups (subaltern) use music to shape people's opinions about illegal migration and to reject a futile system of governance forcing people to escape the country in what is commonly referred to in local parlance as 'death' boats.

### **Tunisian Rap and Resistance**

This article is focused on Tunisian rap songs that deal with *harga*. It considers this type of music to be a music of resistance and protest. Resistance and protest have been used in different contexts ranging from the political, the social, the economic to the individual behaviour and lifestyle (Hollander and Einwohner 2004). This in turn makes the definition of these concepts a daunting task. A quick search for the meaning of 'resistance' in *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, shows association between 'resistance' and fighting for, striving against, acting in opposition to, withstanding someone, a force, a state or a person' (Oxford English Dictionary 2020). Similarly, protest is linked to 'objection and dissent.' These definitions are echoed in a comparative analysis of the different definitions of resistance by Hollander and Einwohner (2004) who concurred that resistance is an activity that 'occurs in opposition to someone or something else.' However, the most important element in Hollander and Einwohner's study of resistance remains signalling 'political solidarity with the oppressed and downtrodden,' which gives the writer the possibility to take sides in 'power struggles.' In brief, resistance and protest are linked in this paper to the struggle against marginalisation and immobility.

*Harga* rap songs constitute an aspect of resistance songs. This connection is in keeping with what Habermas conceived as the inclusion of the 'cultural realm' (songs) in the 'public sphere.' This 'sphere' consists according to Habermas of music, art, and literature (Habermas 1991). The focus of this study is on *harga*

songs as aspects of a discourse which resists and protests against the ruling regime and the current state of affairs. *Harga* songs are calls for action to put an end to the ‘misery’ and its root causes which made a large number of Tunisians ride the dangerous waves despite the looming death and the increasing presence of border patrols on both sides of the Mediterranean. *Harga* rap songs are considered acts of cultural and political resistance. It is true that these songs were not performed in marches or in street protests, but these acts happen, ‘when people strum guitars and sing’ (Street et al. 2008). Unlike other songs of *harga* which stressed alienation, exile, loneliness, misery...etc., these songs encapsulate resistance against poverty, corruption and nepotism.

### **Harga Songs as a Resistance to the Pauperisation of Tunisians**

Tunisian rappers decried in most of their *harga* songs the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of Tunisians. Rappers decried the ‘ruling mafia’ as the main factor propelling young Tunisians to ride the perilous Mediterranean waves to escape marginalisation and pauperisation at home. In his song *EL Harba* (escape), Psycho (2017) considered *harga* the last best resort for Tunisian youth because the country is not meant for the poor. He addressed his Mother, commonly referred to in Tunisian endearing terms as *loumima* or *yamma*:

Don't listen to them!  
 They are the ones who made me cry,  
 Those are the ones who kept silent,  
 They turned a blind eye to injustice,  
 I don't have a way out:  
 Either I escape or I am burnt,  
 They are the happy few  
 They made their parents happy,  
 And we are here just for the sake of company,

We, either unemployed or imprisoned...  
 I have to cross the sea,  
 Start a new life.  
 I am escaping their draconian laws,  
 Escaping the police,  
 I am sorry the country is in ruins,  
 Just so those with influence can live.  
 This is their country!  
 This country does not care about us!  
 They threw us to the fish!  
 Children of presidents in comfort, they live!  
 They gave us promises,  
 When in power, in neglect they left us,  
 More pain, they inflicted on us!  
 We thought they were men of honour!  
 But they were devils with ties!  
 Pray Darling: May Allah destroy them!

Claims by Tunisian rappers that poverty at home makes Tunisians cross the Mediterranean Sea in makeshift boats, or what they were referred to in other parts of Africa as pirogues<sup>9</sup>, are given evidence in statistics by the Tunisian National Institute of Statistics. According to this Institute (2017), poverty rates in Tunisia reached 20.5 per cent in Tunisia in 2010. This percentage reached 36 per cent in rural areas the same year and the number of Tunisians living below the breadline reached almost two million in 2015, with the highest numbers in rural areas. The rates of poverty kept aggravating and in 2016 almost 30 per cent of Tunisians lived below the poverty line. It needs to be mentioned in this context that these rates were manipulated and distorted, mainly for political reasons, and sometimes statistics which document the huge scale of poverty have not been published (Nabli 2017). Most Tunisians expected better prospects in the wake of the Tunisian Revolution with the main slogan ‘employment, freedom and dignity.’ However, these quests remained largely unfulfilled after almost a decade of the Tunisian revolution and, as illustrated through these statistics, the socio-economic conditions of Tunisians, in particular the working class, continued to deteriorate and consequently thousands of Tunisians, including the highly skilled, strive for better prospects elsewhere.

The register of *Harga* songs is replete with expressions related to poverty, deprivation and marginalisation. Expressions like *hogra* (neglect/disdain), *maghour* (frustrated), *misère* (misery), *mout* (death), *mahrouk* (burnt), .... are common in *harga* songs. This diction shows that poverty and marginalisation are the main factors leading to *harga*. In the song *AL Borkan* (The Volcano), Klay BBJ decried, in vulgar diction, the condition of Tunisians:

People are queuing in front of your prisons,  
Men escaping in boats,  
They either die or they are kidnapped  
We are living ... in sewers!

The same theme is echoed in other songs by the same rapper who stresses the fact that the conditions at home are leading Tunisian youth to escape regardless of uncertain outcomes. Furthermore, as a consequence of poverty, Tunisians have been portrayed as victims of drugs in most of rap songs. For example, Kafon (2018) raps:

My friends invited me,  
I won't go!  
Leave me here,  
Leave me on my own,  
Those who like me,  
I need a joint!  
My mind is brimming with misery,  
I am fed up,  
I want to escape!

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<sup>9</sup>Apart from its literal meaning as a boat, the Pirogue is the title of a film about *harga* which describes the journey of a group of illegal migrants from Senegal to Spain by the Senegalese director Moussa Touré.

Kafon illustrated the experience of Tunisian youth as victims of drug addiction. According to a recent study by the Tunisian Ministry of Health, the consumption of cannabis more than doubled between 2013 and 2017 and the consumption of Ecstasy pills increased 7 times between 2013 and 2017. These rates show the sheer scale of this problem and the way the Tunisian authorities are turning a blind eye to the plight of Tunisians. However, rappers managed to bring to the fore the experiences of the Tunisian youth with drugs. This makes part of what Usama Kahf considered ‘the Emotional/Experiential dimension’ which is based on the experience of the artist who identifies with a cause and with an audience (Kahf 2007). In brief, most rap songs depict Tunisian youth as victims of poverty and marginalisation and drug addiction as a consequence of the continuous failure of successive governments to address the needs of Tunisians in an environment plagued by corruption.

### ***Harga* Songs as Resistance to Corruption**

In addition to resisting the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of Tunisians, Tunisian rap represents a huge reservoir of protest against corruption and nepotism. Almost all rap *harga* songs consider nepotism and corruption a major factor shaping the decision of young Tunisians to ride the waves to Europe. *Espoir Perdu* (lost hope) by Psycho and Gaddour (2012) is a good example. The protagonist, an elite university graduate, finds that for whatever job, you needed a ‘*piston*.’<sup>10</sup> This common practice made this graduate look for ways and find *harga* to be his last resort. *Espoir Perdu* tells the story of many Tunisians who consider education a means of social uplift, but unfortunately they find themselves unemployed mainly because of cronyism:

I put all my dreams in my books,  
I kept dreaming of a perfect future,  
I focused on my studies.  
My mother’s prayers were with me,  
Thanks to her, I was successful.  
Being the best became a habit,  
Thanks to Allah I graduated,  
Unfortunately, my joy was over.  
My life a nightmare it became.  
And you know the story...  
A diploma was not enough  
You need a *piston*!

The plight of this student is manifest in the number of graduates added to the list of the unemployed in Tunisia. According to the Tunisian Institute of National Statistics (2019), a third of Tunisian higher education graduates are unemployed. It is worth noting that the myth of education as a means of social uplift for young

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<sup>10</sup>This expression refers to people of influence as a key for getting a job. It is commonly known as ‘*wasta*’ (a medium) in other Arab countries; someone to help you establish the needed connections).

Tunisians is 'dead', and this explains, to a large extent, the decision of many Tunisians to embark on their perilous journey in search of better opportunities. In this regard, it is interesting to point to the fact that, in addition to *harga* being a clandestine form of migration, Tunisia is witnessing a parallel brain drain. This drain consists of educated and well trained Tunisians who are marginalised at home, but have found proper channels to leave the country. A comparison of the factors leading to the immigration of both categories, *harraga* and educated Tunisians, shows a similarity of the push factors. For example, in an interview with France 24, Mondher Kouli, Head of the Orthopedic Department at Charles Nicole Hospital in Tunisia, lamented the immigration of Tunisian doctors as a result of the deteriorating conditions in Tunisian hospitals. Consequently, 50 per cent of newly graduated doctors left the country between 2016 and 2019. Similarly, in 2018, 72 per cent of highly qualified Tunisian graduates left the country in search of better and more decent work conditions, which was described as an unprecedented brain 'haemorrhage' (Dejoui 2018). Tunisian authorities, however, use expressions like 'mobility' (Blaise, Tlili and Szakal) instead of probing into the factors pushing many Tunisians to look for an escape.

*Espoir Perdu* illustrates what Kahf (2007) considers to be the emotional-experimental dimension of rap music which uses the image of the 'victim,' in this case a successful student whose diligence did not lead to the improvement of his social-status after graduation, which is the plight of thousands of Tunisians. This song creates, as Kahf (2007) put it, "identification" with other people with similar 'conscience invoking experiences.' At the same time *Espoir Perdu* dispels the stereotypes of *harraga* as failures, social outcasts, lazy people, dreamers, drug addicts, and criminals. *Harga* songs served in this way as a voice of the thousands of Tunisians who ended up unemployed in an environment which has been for years plagued with endemic corruption. According to a 2018 report by the OECD, even those who want to start their own businesses face various administrative obstacles nurtured by corruption-related practices. Corruption changed, according to the same report, into a barrier to investment as it makes the cost of investment higher, hinders individual initiative and consequently hampers job creation (OECD 2018). The business environment in general has been affected by corruption and many other imperfections and uncertainties, and is not conducive for substantial investment and enterprise creation. Small entrepreneurs, who are not well-connected to the old political elite, have been particularly affected by the lack of clear rules and rampant corruption. According to a 2018 report by the Tunisia's National Authority for Combating Corruption, corruption remains among the top concerns for Tunisians. Similarly, according to Transparency International (2016), 64 per cent of Tunisians considered corruption in Tunisia on the rise and 30 per cent of Tunisians considered government employees among the most corrupt in the country. The same watchdog documented corruption in almost all sectors and administrations: agriculture, services, education, the police, transportation or health services. Whatever the sector, corruption is the order of the

day. The aggravation of levels of corruption in post Revolution Tunisia is well-illustrated in the song *Harrag*<sup>11</sup> (2015):

Those who used tell lies are telling more lies.  
 Those who used to steal are stealing more!  
 Okay, I have to tell you: you stay on your own  
 We will go!

This song epitomizes a faltering system of governance, which should under normal circumstances, combat all sorts of corruption. Unfortunately, this system is compelling young Tunisians to look for an escape regardless of the means, the ends or the costs.

### ***Harga* Songs as Resistance to Immobility**

*Harga* songs not only protest against corruption at home, but at the same time present a rejection of the EU draconian immigration restrictions. Europe started from the early 1970s to close its borders. The development of the Schengen Agreement in 1985 made entry into the EU a major challenge. However, with the adoption of the Schengen convention in 1990 and the adoption of a common Visa policy, *harga* became the last resort for people seeking to reach the other side of the Mediterranean. In most *Harga* songs, rappers consider *EL Babour* (makeshift boat) a source of ‘hope’ especially as the majority of working class Tunisians, sometimes even the middle class, cannot get a Schengen Visa through proper channels. Consequently, *harga* became the best option to reach their *El Dorado*. Mon3om-DMC FEAT and Akram-MAG’s (2015) song VISA illustrates the rejection of the Visa system:

O’ Boat! Mark my presence!  
 I am on my way to the land of Romans,  
 I tore up my passport and my documents too!  
 The Visa is too expensive for me  
 I want to make money!  
 I travel, life might be better!

The song shows the rejection of the Visa system and instead, in a protest style, which is clear in the rhythm of the song, gives this young Tunisian the chance to dream of a better life beyond the confines of embassies. This song represents a rejection of the Tunisian law which criminalises illegal migration as it imposes restrictions on the movement of people. The law, putatively meant to protect people from trafficking, protects the European Union from illegal migration. The latter sought, through agreements with Tunisia, to externalise the control of immigration. This policy aimed to ‘outsource’ migration control to Tunisia to intercept immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees and arrest them

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<sup>11</sup>*Harrag*. (Illegal migrant) (2015) Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHHz8r4yRIY>. [Accessed 30 June 2020].

before they reached Europe. This will help EU countries avoid any kind of obligations towards these people. Tunisia changed, according to crimmigration expert Badalič (2019), into a buffer zone and a pre-frontier to Europe. Badalič qualified this law as ‘illegal’ as it violates the human rights of irregular migrants. According to Badalič, the Tunisian authorities, on behalf of the EU, engage into illegal practices, which systemically violate human rights, and has perverse effects on illegal migrants to Europe. He concluded that by ‘by outsourcing migration controls to Tunisia, ... the EU avoided its international obligations towards asylum seekers coming from/through Tunisia.’

The resistance to immobility is given more legitimacy when we look at the EU/Tunisian agreements on immigration and economic cooperation. These agreements were mostly ‘opportunistic’ and served in particular the EU security and economic interests as the trade agreements with the EU, supposedly meant to combat illegal immigration through economic development, were uneven and slowed the growth of Tunisian exports. Most of these agreements protected EU markets, supported industries at the expense of agriculture and in turn aggravated ‘the underdevelopment of Tunisia’s interior’ (Kallander 2013). Tunisia’s agreement with the EU, meant to boost technology transfer, direct investment, and employment, brings minor gains to Tunisia. Instead, it gives advantage to European exports and forces Arab Mediterranean countries to open their markets to EU exports. In this regard, the benefits of the EU are 8 times higher than Tunisia. The EU agreements with the Arab Mediterranean countries in general, according to Yara Abdul-Hamid’s report (2003) to Oxfam, lead only to more unemployment. Béatrice Hibou (2003) criticised these agreements, which she conceded, were not conducive for more investment and development. She concluded that Tunisia, “*le bon élève*” of the EU, did not benefit from “cooperation” with Europe.

### **Rap Songs and the Identity of *Harraga***

In addition to the different aspects of resistance encapsulated in rap *harga* songs, these songs served to carve the class identity of *harraga*. It is true that the use of class is highly controversial with the frequent references to the ‘decline’, the ‘death’ and the ‘fall’ of class (Nisbet 1959; Pakulski 1993), especially as we are not dealing with a working class collectivity in a traditional manufacturing line. Nevertheless, ‘class’ remains relevant, as Rosemary Crompton (2008) put it, for the analysis of ‘late modern’ societies. For the purpose of this article, class refers to a social strata of pauperised people, the focus of *harga* songs, devoid of the collective political and social agency of the old working class collectivity. In simple terms, it is used to stress ‘social inequality and social differentiation’ (Crompton 2008). We use class to refer to a strata of people who found that they were neglected and alienated at home and therefore the only hope for them is escape (*harga*). This class of people appropriated *harga* songs because they represent for them their everyday travails. For example, It is common to find Tunisians, sometimes even children from working class backgrounds, singing

'*nhib ngataa*'<sup>12</sup> or the famous Algerian *harga* song '*ya babour ya mon amour*'<sup>13</sup> because these songs represent a mirror of their everyday world and at the same time their dreams of a better world.

The class identity in *harga* songs is reflected through language. These songs are in Tunisian *darija*, where the notion of the working class is manifest in the accent of rappers. The working class accent is clear and establishes the link between the accent (the voice) and the place of *harraga*, *houma* (working class conurbation in Tunisian dialect). This is a different space; it is simply a 'different country' to borrow the expression of Valerie Hey (1997) when referring to her experience with the Middle class, where the linguistic and the material converge to create the identity of *harraga*.

Tunisian rappers use the two main prongs of identity 'sameness' (the common) and 'differentiation'. When they stress 'sameness', rappers tend to focus on 'what they share with, and how they differ from others [so as] to persuade certain people that they are (for certain purposes) 'identical' with one another' (Brubaker 2000). The stress on sameness in the context of *harga* songs manifests through the frequent use of 'we' in reference to people going through the same ordeal, *harraga*. The use of 'we' conveys identification with a common predicament and a common cause. We the poor, the downtrodden, the masses betrayed by successive governments, the people excluded from the mainstream media and convinced to quit.

However, when they stress 'differentiation', rappers use frequently 'they' and 'them'. Both (they and them) are used to refer to those at the origins of the impoverishment and alienation of *harraga*, the happy few, who do not need to escape. Rapper DJ Costa, for example, used "they" in reference to the Tunisian authorities in particular their "misdeeds":

They promised us!  
 They reassured us!  
 When they took power, they neglected us,  
 They oppressed us!  
 They were devils!  
 They chased us out across the sea,  
 They sank our boats,  
 Your death is better, they said!  
 And all the doors, to us they shut!  
 Marble hearted, are they!  
 A few they arrested,  
 The rest, they drowned!

'They' is used throughout the song in an accusatory tone. The ruling authorities versus the people. They are at the origin of the people's misery and as a consequence, the pauperised class, left to their own devices, found no other option

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<sup>12</sup>This is a song by the Tunisian rapper Kafon. '*Nhib ngataa*' translates into English "I want to escape."

<sup>13</sup>'*Ya babour ya mon amour*' translates into English as "Oh Boat! Oh My Beloved." This is an Algerian Rai song by Redha Taliani.

but ‘*EL Harba*’<sup>14</sup>. DJ Costa (2017) uses frequently “This is their country!” ... as a refrain throughout his song accompanied with sighs of despair. This dichotomy of the ‘we’, *harraga* (the pauperised class), versus ‘they’, the privileged, is common in most of *harga* songs<sup>15</sup>. This contrast defines the identity of *haragga*. They are the poor, the downtrodden, those left behind and omitted in official and political policy and discourse.

*Harga* songs create among listeners a sense of identification and even solidarity with *harraga*. In most of the songs, the country is plagued with corruption, nepotism, and drugs and the final solution is escape. It is a place where values and education are forsaken for money and estates. This is a condition that creates a sense of solidarity with *harraga*. Deceived and left to their own means, *harraga* opt for escape from the deteriorating socio-economic conditions at home. Therefore, *harga*, as a social act, should not be criminalised.

## Conclusion

*Harga* songs document a missing chain in Tunisia’s history. It is the history of thousands of Tunisians who have left the country in death boats or those still planning or dreaming of joining them soon. These songs represent acts of protest against the persistent and systematic marginalisation and alienation of a large section of the Tunisian society. These songs challenged narratives of an economic miracle under Ben Ali and a democratic post revolution Tunisia, especially when we consider social contentment to be a major aspect of democracy.

These songs illustrate the history of the systematic subversion of truth as far as the EU-Tunisia relations are concerned. Despite the fact that it is clearly stated in the introduction to the European Agenda on Migration that the policy of the EU should be premised on using the EU global role ‘to address the root causes of migration’ including ‘poverty’ which does not stop ‘at national frontiers’ (European Commission 2015), security and EU economic interests continued to shape the EU relations with Tunisia. However, *harga* songs, as acts of social protest, serve to illustrate that the policing of the Mediterranean remains a failed solution as long as the root causes of *harga* are not properly addressed.

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<sup>14</sup>‘*EL Harba*’ is the title of the song. It translates into English as “escape.”

<sup>15</sup>See for example, Balti ft Akram Mag - *Chafouni Zawali*. Available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pWHW-sIfTg&list=RDZEHZ7c9JcOE&index=11>. [ accessed August 22, 2020]. See also: Klay and ft. Rayen, Dima Labes. Available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51uJNBsvsuU>. [Accessed August 22, 2020].

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## Collective Decision-Making in Homer's *Odyssey*

By Gregory T. Papanikos \*

*Collective decision-making at the level of a politeia requires a collective body. The ancient Athenian concept of the ecclesia of demos was one such body as was the apella in the ancient city-state of Sparta. Qualified members of demos met at a specific place and venue to make decisions. At the level of a small polis (city-state), such gatherings were easily organized. In such cases, the power (-κρατέω -κράτος) belonged to people. If this power was exercised by the majority (πλείονας) and not by few (μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους) then this system of political organization was called (κέκληται) democracy (δημοκρατία = δῆμος + κράτος) as Thucydides so eloquently wrote in his Peloponnesian War [2.37.1] for all future generations to cherish. Democracy can be considered as the end of a long process (voyage) of developing the art of collective decision making. It is the "Ithaca" of humanity's expedition to discover an ideal political system. This article attempts to shed some (historical) light on this journey by looking at collective decision-making cases in Homer's *Odyssey*. I was able to pinpoint ten such meetings of interest during which a collective decision was made. Three of these meetings were held by immortals and seven by mortals. Some are described in detail while others in a few verses. All of these are discussed in some detail in the different sections of the paper.*

**Keywords:** *demos, democracy, Homer, Odyssey, collective decision making*

### Introduction

The word democracy is composed of two ancient Greek words: δῆμος and κρατέω/κράτος. Both words are found in Homer's writings. In *Odyssey* the word "δῆμος", meaning gatherings of people<sup>1</sup>, is first found in [7.11] in conjunction with a description of a "perfect" *demos* in the land of Phaeacians governed by king Alcinous. His people (*demos*) listened to him, Homer told us, like a God "θεοῦ δ' ὥς δῆμος ἄκουεν"<sup>2</sup>. The word κράτος which in "democracy" means "power" is first found in *Odyssey* [1.70], meaning individual physical strength. Later, [1.359],

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<sup>1</sup>The same word also has a geographical meaning such as an area or a country. Homer used the same word to describe an area or a jurisdiction exactly as the same word is used today in modern Greek, i.e., the City of Athens in Greek is called The Demos of Athens.

<sup>2</sup>I provide my own adaptations of Homer and other ancient Greek writings to the English language. They are not translations. They should be simply considered as my understanding of reading the ancient document. Interested readers can easily find the relevant passages in their own language and according to their own preference of a translation. Nothing can, however, compare with the beauty of the original text. If someone wants an excuse to endeavor into learning Ancient Greek reading Homer's original texts is a good one. Those who are interested in the problems of translating Homer in English should read Dieu's "Introduction" of his translation of Homer's *Odyssey* which was first published in 1946.

Telemachus<sup>3</sup> told his mother that he had the power in their house "τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ". He repeated the same claim with the same wording at the end of *Odyssey* [21.353]. Zeus had the greatest power of all, "...οὗ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον" [5.4]. Thus, literally speaking democracy means "people have power" or "power comes from the people". Either way, this is the true meaning of democracy throughout its history. Very few words were so fortunate as the word "democracy". Its true meaning has remained the same as its literal meaning throughout its long history. The fact that many have misused the word democracy does not change the meaning: even those who misused the word did not question its true connotation.

Many other ancient writers have used the two words after Homer. Hesiod, a contemporary of Homer, used the word *δημος* in his *Works and Days* as well. As a matter of fact, Hesiod's *Works and Days* dealt with the issue of justice at the level of polis as this was dispensed by kings<sup>4</sup>. Herodotus was the first to combine the two words to produce the compound word "democracy". Herodotus used the word as a verb and as a noun. In his *Ιστορίας* [4.137.2], he made the distinction between being ruled by democracy or by tyranny; in his own words: "βουλήσεσθαι γὰρ ἐκάστην τῶν πολιῶν δημοκρατέεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τυραννεύεσθαι". In my translation: "because cities rather wanted to be democracies rather than tyrannies". As a noun is found in, "δημοκρατίας κατίστα ἐς τὰς πόλιας" [6.43.3] and later in the same book, "τούτων δὲ συνουκησάντων γίνεται Κλεισθένης τε ὁ τὰς φυλάς καὶ τὴν δημοκρατὴν Ἀθηναίοισι καταστήσας" [6.131.1]. And in my English, "... all these local communities (φυλάς) Cleisthenes united and established the Athenian democracy".

Thus, learning about democracy one should start adventuring with the word "demos". I begin this exploration of democracy from Homer's *Odyssey*. This paper is part of a larger research project, however, so far, a short book has been produced entitled *Democracy in Ten Lessons* (Papanikos 2020b). This piece here is my first background paper of the first chapter of the book which was entitled *The Demos*. The concept of "demos" is used in the literature of political science and international relations extensively; see among many others and the studies by Abizadeh (2012); List and Koenig-Archibugi (2010); Mayne and Geissel (2016); Thorpe (2010); Van Parijs (2014); Volkova (2013); and Weinstock (2009).

In *Odyssey* ten descriptions of collective decision-making were mentioned; three of which refer to meetings of immortals, and seven of mortals. In *Iliad*, there were many meetings and decision-makings, but these were part of a military expedition and participants did not form a political unity. As a matter of fact, in these meetings, participants were coming from different city-states (polis) of ancient Greece, resembles the NATO alliance today; however these gatherings had nothing to do with the meaning of the word "demos". Nevertheless, there was a

<sup>3</sup>Telemachus is usually ignored in *Odyssey* even though his role was fundamental in preparing for the return of Odysseus and organizing the plot against the Suitors as well as its ethical legitimization. On this issue, see Gottesman (2014).

<sup>4</sup>Hesiod used a beautiful word to describe the bribing of kings-judges. He called them *δαροφάγους* (gift-eaters). Or as he puts it in his masterpiece of *Works and Days*, "μέγα κυδαίνων βασιλῆας δαροφάγους, οἳ τήνδε δίκην ἐθέλουσι δίκασσαι" [38–39]. In English, "...greatly flattering the gift-eaters kings who this way judge".

meeting of Trojans during the Trojan War which is briefly mentioned in the *Odyssey*, as I will show below in this article.

The basic thesis of my paper is that these collective decision-making gatherings can be considered as precursors of democracy. Furthermore, my own reading of *Odyssey* shows that Homer was very favorable to collective decision-making. Even in cases that kings or Zeus made a decision they had to take into consideration mortals' and immortals' opinions and reactions. If they did not, then political instability could result as is clearly mentioned in *Odyssey*. Here, a disguised Odysseus asks Telemachus what was the reason of the political anomaly which existed in the island of Ithaca as is shown below. However, Homer was not against kings. On the contrary, the *Odyssey* favors kings as long as people like them because they rule with justice and take people's opinions into consideration. But Homer's epics paved the way to democracy by educating all future generations. *Odyssey* and *Iliad* along with Hesiod's *Works and Days* and *Theogony* became the textbooks which were used to teach all Greeks from the eighth century onwards.

Plato, in his *Politeia* [606e], clearly recognized the value of Homer's epics. The great philosopher said, "...τὴν Ἑλλάδα πεπαιδεύκεν οὗτος ὁ ποιητής καὶ πρὸς διοίκησίν τε καὶ παιδείαν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων ἄξιος ἀναλαβόντι μανθάνειν τε καὶ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν ποιητὴν πάντα τὸν αὐτοῦ βίον κατασκευασάμενον ζῆν". This poet taught Greece (τὴν Ἑλλάδα πεπαιδεύκεν), how to be governed (διοίκησίν), how to study human issues (παιδείαν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων) and how to live their private and public lives (αὐτοῦ βίον κατασκευασάμενον ζῆν). The emphasis here is put on the word "διοίκησίν" because it relates to collective decision making at the level of a given politeia. A perfect politeia was Plato's subject in the book where Homer is mentioned. Homer in *Odyssey* outlined such an ideal politeia as is mentioned below.

Based on Plato's comment, my received view of the benefits of studying Homer are as follows. Firstly, studying Homer makes me a virtuous man. This has its own intrinsic value even though in *Odyssey* vices are not always punished. Secondly, I can implement my own decisions because as a human being I have free will --This is what Zeus told me in the opening verses of *Odyssey*. Gods do not decide everything for me. I can forge my own destiny as long as I do not commit the crime of hubris (ὕβρις). If I do, then Gods will punish me because I upset them<sup>5</sup>. In ancient Greek this was expressed with the word *νέμεσις* which has exactly the same meaning as the word *nemesis* in many languages today<sup>6</sup>. For

<sup>5</sup>The problem with the system of ancient Gods was that there were too many and, in some cases, mortals were caught in the crossfires between immortals as was the case between Poseidon and Athene. In modern Greece this problem has been solved despite the fact that an individual may have his/her own divine protection from God himself (the father), the Holy Mother (a Goddess Herself), the Son (a God himself), thousands of saints and half saints (osioi) who once they protect a mortal the others do not intervene. All these have the power to make "miracles".

<sup>6</sup>The process is as follows: *ἄτη* (craziness, blindness, confusion, acting on impulse) → *ὕβρις* (hybris) → *νέμεσις* (nemesis) → *τίσις* (punishment). For some unexplained reason, Odysseus got mad and acted on impulse when he was leaving a blinded Polyphemus behind him. He committed hybris with what he said which had upset the Gods (nemesis); in his case Poseidon who punished him by making his trip (nostos) longer and full of worries. It goes beyond the scope of this paper to further

example, Odysseus committed *hybris* and Poseidon punished him. Thirdly, Homer empowers me to deal with human issues and human behaviour. *Odyssey* has many such paradigms of how to deal with people, e.g., Odysseus's approach of Nausicaa and her polite response to him; Alcinous' *philoxenia* of Odysseus; Nestor's treatment of Telemachus; Helen's praise of Odysseus; Suitors' and servants' behavior in Odysseus' palace; etc. Fourthly, reading Homer makes someone a better citizen in governing the *politeia*. Many examples of good governing (*διοίκησις*) exist in *Odyssey*. A few are presented in this paper. Good governing implies some sort of consensus and trust on the process of making decisions. Keeping citizens informed is part of good governing and in *Odyssey* most of the meetings served this purpose. Homer taught all future generations that good governors (kings, rulers, elected politicians) are those who respect justice and keep their people and society happy. As mentioned above, in Hesiod's *Works and Days* justice was the central issue, and according to my opinion, it was treated much better than in *Odyssey*. However, given that both were produced around the eighth century BCE, they had the same effect as far as the education of future generations was concerned. Reading and re-reading the two works -*Odyssey* and *Works and Days*- I distill the same conclusion: justice makes people happy and their *politeia* flourishing. The message is clear: justice brings material prosperity and happiness in a *politeia*. Homer and Hesiod did not go as far as to say that democracy is a system of political organization which gives power to the people to decide for themselves and this makes them happier. It was left to Thucydides who used the occasion of Pericles' Funeral Oration in the first year of the Peloponnesian war (431–404 BCE) to praise the happiness democracy brings to people.

This paper emphasizes what we can learn from *Odyssey* as far as collective decision-making is concerned. I follow a very flexible and practical interpretation of the process of collective decision-making. There are many facets of collective decision-making that we can identify. It by no means necessarily implies a voting mechanism and/or some kind of formal approval --there is no such thing in *Odyssey*—but rather a process of what today would be called brainstorming. At the end of it only one (e.g., Zeus or a King) decides, and quite possibly someone else implements that decision (e.g., Athene). Another term which is used quite often is collective bargaining. Some of the issues discussed below could be considered as the collective bargaining processes because we have two opposite parties compromising in order to reach an agreement or a decision. For the sake of this argument, I claim that there was collective bargaining between Poseidon and Athene as to what would happen to Odysseus with Zeus being the moderator. At the end, Athene got what she wanted, albeit after Poseidon, in the interim, was given the time to take his revenge with Odysseus.

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analyze this process but since everything starts from *ἄτη*, then one must start with the question "who makes people mad in the first place?" and then proceed with the rest. If Gods make people mad (as many believed in ancient Greek times including Homer himself) in order to commit *hybris* so that they can have an excuse to get upset and punish them, then it is Gods that should be blamed and not the weak mortals who cannot resist. Actually, ancient Greeks had a Goddess for *ἄτη* with the same name. She was the one who made people mad.

The paper is organized in fourteen sections including this introduction. In the next section, I say a few words about the legacy of *Odyssey*. In the following section, I present a summary of all the meetings which in one way or another includes collective decision-making. In the following sections (sections four to thirteen) I discuss the meetings mentioned in the *Odyssey*. In the last section, I conclude.

### The Long Legacy of *Odyssey* in a Few Words

*Odyssey* is an epic poem with 12,110 verses written in what is called Homeric hexameter. There is a practical explanation for this: these poems were supposed to be memorized because printed versions were not available and even if they were most people did not know how to read. The first who recited these epics were called *αοιδοί*; sort of a singer. They had no written script in front of them and in many cases they improvised. By the sixth century BCE, the *αοιδοί* were replaced by the *rhapsodists*. The tyrant of Athens Peisistratus, or his son Hipparchus recorded the epics in order to make sure that all *rhapsodists* delivered the same verses during the various festivities such as the Panathenaea. Homer was most probably a *rhapsodist* who had been traveling around reciting his poems.

In the early years, memory played an important role as it still plays today. Ancient Greeks had a goddess devoted to memory, called Mnemosyne, who was the mother of nine girls called muses; the latter were protecting all arts and sciences. Without the muses and mnemosyne (memory), there is no gnosis (knowledge). The role of muses was considered fundamental for both Homer and Hesiod. They started their poems by calling upon the muses either to speak on behalf of them or inspire them to tell what they had to tell, i.e., an epic and a didactic poem respectively<sup>7</sup>. The reader does not know who is talking, Homer or the Muses. In the opening verses of *Odyssey*, Homer called upon a muse (which of the nine he did not tell us) to voice/say (ἔννεπε) about a man (his name is not mentioned until later) who is in the middle of something. It is really amazing that in the first twenty-verses the entire story is told from the beginning until the end: no suspense, no mystery. The historical time of *Odyssey* is forty-one days but the dramatic time spans over a period of ten years. If you do not like long stories, the twenty-one verses are sufficient. If you like the true history of events, still the twenty-one verses are sufficient because as Thucydides warned: a few centuries later, "...Ὅμηρος τοῦτο δεδήλωκεν, εἴ τῳ ἰκανὸς τεκμηριῶσαι" [*The Peloponnesian War* 1.9.4]. This was said by Homer if he was able to authenticate it at all. And a few lines later, "...τῇ Ὀμήρου αὖ ποιήσει εἴ τι χρὴ κἀνταῦθα πιστεύειν, ἦν εἰκὸς ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον μὲν ποιητὴν ὄντα κοσμήσαι" [*The Peloponnesian War* 1.10.3]. These were what Homer told us with his poems but we do not need to believe him because as a poet it was simply natural that he overstated it by "cosmetics". My interpretation of Thucydides on Homer is that what he thought

<sup>7</sup>This practice was copied in the first century BCE by Publius Vergilius Maro or Virgil (70–19 BCE) in his excellent epic book *Aeneid*. Vergil's introduction is a mirror image of Homer's *Odyssey*.

about Homer was that he was a good poet but he should not be trusted as a historical source.

Homer told us, in the first twenty-one verses of a man who conquered the sacred castle of Troy and now running around alone because all of his comrades had lost their lives. However, nobody is to blame (Odysseus or the Gods) but his comrades themselves because they had after all eaten Helios' sacred oxen even though they were warned against it. They committed *hybris*<sup>8</sup>. Now this man is not only alone, but also a prisoner of Goddess Calypso who wanted him as her mate. After seven years of the company of a woman in love (Calypso) to a man full of nostalgia (Odysseus), this man wanted to return back to his home. The place is explicitly mentioned: *Ἰθάκην* (Ithaca), which, unlike other places mentioned by Homer, it was real place; and not fantasy. But the Gods had decided to change his destiny despite the strong opposition by Zeus' brother Poseidon who was angry at the man because he blinded one of his Cyclops, named Polyphemus. At the end of these first twenty-one verses, it is revealed that the man's name is *Ὀδυσῆι* (Odysseus). We also learn that he would finally reach his homeland and would see again his beloved wife and son. No suspense. End of myth. End of story.

*Iliad* and *Odyssey* are historical novels<sup>9</sup> written during the geometric age (1000–700 BCE) describing events which took place a couple of centuries before during the Mycenaean epoch; during the last year of a ten-year siege of Troy (*Iliad*) and ten years thereafter (*Odyssey*). It is a period of a great decline of the Mycenaean civilization which was to be followed by a long period of political instability and exacerbating mobility towards east and west; all over the Mediterranean Sea. They departed from the Greek mainland and established colonies everywhere in the Mediterranean Sea. Herodotus and Thucydides gave us a good description of what had followed the return of the heroes of Troy. Hesiod in his *Works and Days* had devoted a separate race for them as being something special.

So, what is so important about the *Odyssey* or Homeric Epics in general? Despite my preference of Hesiod's *Work and Days*, as an economist I must admit that the demand for the Homeric epics has been much greater than the demand for Hesiod's very practical and down to earth *Works and Days*. Again, Thucydides has warned us that people do not like practical things. They do not like the truth. They like stories which entertain them. *Iliad* and *Odyssey* serve this purpose exceptionally well. The *Works and Days* does not. This legacy has shaped the west and to that extent, the entire world. Many writers have recognized this legacy or

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<sup>8</sup>As an economist I do not agree with this interpretation because if people have a choice starving to death and eat the sacred oxen even if the punish is death, I would definitely prefer the latter if there are no afterlife consequences. On another note, what was the crime committed by Odysseus' comrades, which justified all the trouble they had to go through with Odysseus and at the end punished them with death? Homer never told us. The legacy is that Odysseus was an honest man obeying Gods but apparently his comrades were not. I am not persuaded but this is not important. Homer's epics are full of contradictions and anachronisms but they make a very good story (novel).

<sup>9</sup>Rieu (1946, p. 10), in his English translation of *Odyssey* (originally in 1946) wrote that *Iliad* was a tragedy and *Odyssey* a novel. They were the first of this kind in western literature. And as far as the novel *Odyssey* was concerned, he wrote that, "And though it is the first, I am not sure that it is not still the best. Let the new reader decide for himself".

worked on it such as Adams (2018); Eis (2014); Gasbarra (2016); İşman (2017); Michaels (2014); Milli-Konewko (2020); Needham (2018); Roos (2020); Ruck (2019); Saracco (2018); Smith (2015); Vella (2017); and Whissell (2019) among many others<sup>10</sup>. There is no philosopher nor playwright who has not been affected by Homer's two beautiful stories. For example, Agosto (2019) examined Homer's influence on Sophocles and in general the concept of *demos* in Greek tragedy is examined by Carter (2010). Many issues are still debated. Did Homer write the two epic poems? Were there just one, or many poets who contributed? Were these poems circulating all over the known world and someone called Homer sat down and put them on a piece of papyrus? Did the story of *Odyssey* take place in the Mediterranean Sea or somewhere else<sup>11</sup>? These issues are still the subjects of scientific research, but it goes beyond the scope of this article to discuss these important and very interesting issues --they simply add to the mystery surrounding the whole story of *Odyssey*.

### Collective Meetings in *Odyssey*

In *Odyssey*, I was able to identify ten meetings, which resemble a general assembly, where collective decisions were made. Summary information of these meetings is given in Table 1. The seven columns of the table give the number of the meeting. With the exception of the Trojan meeting, all others are in the chronological order of the historical time that they took place and are actually mentioned in *Odyssey*. The second column gives the historical day of the meeting, taken into consideration that the poem started forty-one days before the story ends. This story described ten years of adventures --not only of Odysseus, but of others, e.g., Menelaus, the king of Sparta. I also tried to provide a description of the subject of the meetings. The next three columns identify wherever possible the place, the venue, and the time. The last column provides the reference to *Odyssey* where these meetings are discussed.

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<sup>10</sup>I opted to include only a selection of recent papers published in one of the different academic journals of the *Athens Journal of Education and Research* (<https://www.athensjournals.gr/>).

<sup>11</sup>See Duichin (2017) and Vinci (2017) who argued that the events of *Odyssey* took place in the Nordic Sea. Some others have extended Odysseus trip to the Americas. All these add to the beauty of *Odyssey*. After all, since antiquity, many people believed in the truthiness of Homeric epics like Heinrich Schliemann whose archaeological evidence unearthed Troy. The city did exist. However, many other places are unknown. One persuasive argument against the hypothesis of Troy and the *Odyssey* is that during these twenty years not a single earthquake is mentioned by Homer when we know that area is full of earthquakes.

**Table 1. Assemblies in *Odyssey***

Meeting	Day	The Subject of the Meeting	Place	Venue	Time	Verses
1	1	Athene requests a decision by Gods to help Odysseus to return to his homeland.	Olympus	Zeus' Palace	Early (?) in the Morning	1.26–1.95
2	2	Telemachus asked for people's support to throw the Suitors out of his palace.	Ithaca	Agora	Early in the Morning	2.6–2.259
3	6	Penelope's Suitors meet to decide how to deal with Telemachus. They decided to kill him upon his return from Pylos and Sparta.	Ithaca	Odysseus's Palace	Evening-About Dinner Time.	4.659–4.673
4	7	Gods' meet for the second time to discuss a failure to implement a part of the plan decided in the first meeting and the new development of Telemachus' threat of his life by the Suitors.	Olympus	Zeus' Palace	Early in the Morning	5.1–5.42
5	33	Alcinous the king of Phaeacians called his people to inform them about the philoxenia he provided to Odysseus and approve his actions.	Scherie	Agora	Early in the morning	8.1–8.49
6	--	Trojans meet to decide what to do with the Trojan Horse.	Troy	Agora	Unknown	8.505–8.510
7	38	Second meeting of Penelope's Suitors to decide the failure of their plan to kill Telemachus on his return from Pylos and Sparta. The meeting ended without a decision which was left to Gods.	Ithaca	Outside the palace of Odysseus	Most probably midday	16.342–16.406
8	40	Third meeting of Penelope's Suitors. They decided not to carry on with their plan to kill Telemachus because Gods' would not approve it.	Ithaca	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	20.240–20.247
9	41	The meeting of the Relatives (mainly fathers) of the Killed Suitors.	Ithaca	Agora	Early in the Morning	24.420–24.465
10	41	Gods' third meeting.	Olympus	Zeus' Palace	Not mentioned	24.470–24.487

In all these meetings there were no voting mechanism; at least was not mentioned by Homer but only a sense of a general approval or disapproval. There is one exception in the ninth meeting where Homer mentioned that the majority (*πλείονες*) decided; it will be discussed below. Three of the ten meetings refer to Gods' meetings. This shows that even Gods meet to decide.

### Gods' First Meeting at the Starting Day of *Odyssey* (1.56–1.108)

After a significant introduction, *Odyssey* opens up with a general assembly where a collective decision had to be taken. This was the first of the three meetings of the Gods mentioned in *Odyssey*. All three meetings took place on the Mount of Olympus and the venue was Zeus' palace. Most probably, it was early in the

morning<sup>12</sup>. We do not know who called the meeting and who were present; with the exception of Zeus and Athene, nobody else's presence is identified. However, we are informed that Poseidon not only was not present, but he was not informed about the meeting, as was stated later, which made him furious<sup>13</sup>. Was it kept secret? Most probably yes. Homer told us that when Poseidon saw Odysseus in the sea sailing for his freedom got upset and shouted that Gods had changed their minds when he had been away in Ethiopia. I assume that, in a previous assembly, Gods' had decided in favor of Poseidon's proposal. Nevertheless, Poseidon accepted Odysseus' destiny to be free but before he had a few days left to make his life miserable --and so, he did.

We do not know the agenda of the meeting; was it a usual morning meeting such as a common everyday breakfast (morning) briefing or did someone initiate it, most probably Athene, who had a keen interest in the issue to be discussed? Zeus made a general opening speech announcing that mortals make the mistake to think that everything --good or bad-- is determined by Gods<sup>14</sup>. According to Zeus, this was not the case. He used the example of Aegisthus who despite that he was warned by Hermes, he had, nevertheless, decided with Clytemnestra to kill Agamemnon.

It seemed like a golden opportunity for Athene to take the floor and bring up the issue of Odysseus. The opportunity had two facets: firstly, Zeus talked about a case that related to the great Trojan War and Odysseus was a big part of it. Secondly, Zeus talked about justice and the free will of mortals. Athene was quick to point out, in front of all Gods, that there were some mortals, who despite their virtues and respect for Gods, were prohibited to act according to their own free will; Gods prevented them from doing so. A case in point was Odysseus who had always respected and honored Gods with sacrifices, but his will of returning to his faithful and beloved wife, humble son, and divine homeland had not been materialized because some Gods (i.e., Poseidon and Calypso) banned him from doing so. Therefore, it was not true, Athene seemed to say, that Gods permit humans to make and implement their own decisions. In this case, Gods intervened not to correct an injustice but to perpetuate it. Zeus seemed to be taken by surprise and responded by saying, "my child how you can say such a thing", or how can you let something like that escape the wall of your teeth (τέκνον ἐμόν, ποῖόν σε

<sup>12</sup>Unlike the second Gods' meeting, Homer did not tell us the time of this first gathering of immortals.

<sup>13</sup>In his own words, "ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ μετεβούλευσαν θεοὶ ἄλλως / ἄμφ' Ὀδυσῆι ἐμεῖο μετ' Αἰθιόπεσσιν ἔοντος, / καὶ δὴ Φαιήκων γαίης σχεδόν, ἔνθα οἱ αἴσα / ἐκφυγέειν μέγα πείραρ ὀϊζύος, ἢ μιν ἰκάνει/ ἄλλ' ἔτι μὲν μίν φημι ἄδην ἔλααν κακότητος" [5.286–5.290].

<sup>14</sup>Serving for fourteen years in an organization which according to the Greek constitution and the European Union's sister organizations had the mission to promote dialogue between the various social partners (civil society), I was spending hours and hours every day listening to various arguments in order to shape decisions. Whenever our political body was addressed by some important persons, such as head of states, prime ministers etc. they thought that they were Zeus. I always had a smile in my face because their speeches reminded me of this opening speech of Zeus. What they had in common was their nothingness. Some general and vague statements about justice and democracy.

ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων [1.64]<sup>15</sup>. He was in defense and accused Poseidon for such a mistreatment of Odysseus, but the time had come to rectify this injustice. Now that Poseidon was away, the rest of them could decide to allow Odysseus to return to his homeland because Zeus did not think Poseidon would ever dare to go against Gods' unanimous decision. Thus, it was a collective decision to permit (help) Odysseus to return to his homeland. A satisfied Athene suggested a quick plan of action. Nobody seemed to reject the plan. It was a unanimous, collective decision with the exception of Poseidon who was absent and not informed. On the plan, I will say more later.

I would like to highlight a few things. Firstly, Zeus' intervention was full of contradictions which were exploited by Athene to extract a favorable decision. Secondly, this decision was taken in the absence of Poseidon, which by itself was not very ethical. If Gods could do it, then mortals could do it as well, and so they have done. Anthropomorphism characterized ancient Greek Gods and therefore some of their decisions did not serve justice as well as do decisions taken by mortals. Thirdly, Zeus wished that his brother would accept a unanimous decision but as we learned later, he did not; Zeus could have asked him beforehand but he did not. It is common practice in the collective decision-making processes to exploit the absence of people who strongly oppose. Fourthly, Athene knowing this and taking advantage of Poseidon's absence, was very eager to have her plan approved before Poseidon returned. By the time Poseidon found out, it was too late. Athene's eagerness was shown later when she "apologized" to Odysseus for not acting earlier because she did not want to fight with Poseidon: "ἀλλά τοι οὐκ ἐθέλησα Ποσειδάωνι μάχεσθαι" [13.341]. Fifthly, Athene as the goddess of wisdom (canniness) reiterated her status in the way that she managed the extraction of a favorable decision. This opportunistic practice has been repeated many times thereafter in meetings where collective decisions are taken by people who think they are "Gods". Actually, in her speech did not mention the hybris of Odysseus but reminded Zeus that Calypso was the daughter of his archenemy, Atlas, a Titan.

The moral of the story is that favorable decisions may be obtained if those who strongly oppose are absent (sick, on vacation etc.), and there exists some contradictions in the positions of those who are mildly opposed or are indifferent. Good, supportive arguments like the ones given by Athene can pull the strings. But as we shall see, this was necessary but not sufficient. A second Gods' general assembly was called a few days later to correct some gaps in the execution of Athene's plan. In the meantime, Athene was busy implementing the first phase of her plan which included a meeting of mortals this time. This is examined in the next section.

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<sup>15</sup>The phrase is discussed by Rieu (1946) to demonstrate how difficult is to translate Homer's idioms. In modern Greek this is expressed like, "deep your tongue into your brain before you speak" but I find Homer's expression, which has not survived in modern Greek, much more eloquent. Sometimes, people who want to say something which will upset someone, who is superior they say it keeping their teeth closed something like mumbling.

### The General Assembly of the Demos of Ithaca on the Second Day of *Odyssey* [2.6–2.259]

The idea of a general assembly of the demos of Ithaca came from Athene. The message was clear to all those who listened or later read Homer's *Odyssey*: Gods not only approve such meetings, but helped the mortals to organize them. Who would dare to go against Gods' will and oppose a peoples' meeting? This first meeting of mortals in the *Odyssey* had been suggested by Athene after discussing it in the first assembly of the Olympian Gods, "... εἰς ἀγορὴν καλέσαντα" [1.90]. We assume that the other Gods did not object with the exception of Poseidon who was absent.

Athene committed herself that she would bring this message to Telemachus. The same day she "flew" from Olympus and reached Ithaca just at the time when the Suitors and Telemachus were ready to start a symposium. Athene was disguised as an old acquaintance of Odysseus, Mentès, from the island of Taphion; a nearby island well-known for his tradesmen, probably the island of Meganisi. Telemachus is advised by Athene-Mentes, among many other things, to stand up to his responsibilities and call a general assembly of the Demos of Ithaca. Athene put it explicitly to Telemachus, "αὔριον εἰς ἀγορὴν καλέσας ἥρωας Ἀχαιοὺς μῦθον πέφραδε πᾶσι, θεοὶ δ' ἐπὶ μάρτυροι ἔστων" [1.272–1.273]. Tomorrow, told Telemachus, call all the people in the agora and tell them that this had the support of Gods. This is an indication of Homer's support of the idea of collective decision-making at the level of a demos. Thus, those who objected such a meeting would commit a hybris which will insult Gods (nemesis) who put such general assemblies under their auspices. Punishment (τίσις) would result.

Telemachus was anxious after Athene's encouragement. The same evening, during the symposium, he announced to Penelope's Suitors, who were all present enjoying their banquet, that tomorrow morning he would invite all people of Ithaca to a general assembly to ask them to leave his palace, "... ἠῶθεν δ' ἀγορήνδε καθεζόμεσθα κίοντες πάντες, ἴν' ὕμιν μῦθον ἀπηλεγέως ἀποείπω, ἐξέιναι μεγάρων" [1.372–1.374]. However, the debate started right away inside the palace. Two of the Suitors responded to Telemachus, but further deliberations were left for the next day.

Early in the morning the next day, a caller (κῆρυξ) invited his compatriots to a general assembly (κηρύσσειν ἀγορήνδε). Many came very quickly (τοὶ δ' ἠγείροντο μάλ' ὄκω). Last went Telemachus who sat on his father throne in the agora (ἔξετο δ' ἐν πατρὸς θώκῳ). Thus, the agora was a permanent meeting place where a throne was available for the king to preside during general assemblies. The fact that the throne was now occupied by Odysseus' son Telemachus without any reaction being mentioned, it can be interpreted that he was recognized by the demos of Ithaca as having a right to the throne; at least for the time being. Some commentators of Homer claim that *Odyssey* provided a criticism of kings and aristocrats. I do not see this. Kings like Alcinous, Nestor, Menelaus, and Odysseus himself were praised. Here, Homer put Telemachus, a king-to-be, at the center of the scene without any reaction from the people, or even from the Suitors

themselves. What I read from this is that Homer wanted the people to play a more active role in decision-making and not to overthrow their kings.

The first to speak in the assembly was an old man, named Aegyptius, who had four sons; one was with Odysseus but was gobbled by Polyphemus; the other was one of the many Suitors and the other two worked in the family estate. Aegyptius said this was the first time a general assembly was called after twenty years because king Odysseus was absent<sup>16</sup>. Thus, it was natural to ask who called the meeting of the demos (δήμιον) and what he wanted to declare (πιφάσκειται) by talking to the general assembly (ἀγορεύει) [2.32]. The choice of the words here are very important because they were developed into the "jargon" of democracy during the classical years<sup>17</sup>. First, it was recognized that this crowd was a "legitimate" political body to make decisions. It was not a meeting of an army, but an assembly of what today would be called a "civil society". The verb "πιφάσκω" has its own important meaning as well. It means that I make an official public declaration. The last word is more important because it means that I speak in the "agora" in front of the demos. Later in the Athenian general assembly, called ecclesia of demos, the starting phrase was made by the caller (κῆρυξ) who shouted who wanted to make a speech or "τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται". Thus, all three words were used in the context of an assembly of demos and this is what I want to stress here. There is no doubt that these meetings took place regularly and all participants had the right to "ἀγορεύειν".

After Aegyptius posed the question, Telemachus stood up, left the throne and went in the middle of the agora to announce that he was the one who called the meeting. Again, nobody questioned his right to do so. As he was moving to the middle, the herald (κῆρυξ) Peisenor put in his hand a sceptre, "σκῆπτρον δέ οἱ ἔμβαλε χειρὶ" [2.37] which meant some kind of authority. My purpose here is not to present the debates between Telemachus and the Suitors, but to emphasize that this was a quarrel that one could easily find in any modern assembly at all levels of decision-makings. Telemachus was an emotional speaker and tried hard to appease his audience. At the end, he threw his sceptre away and started to cry. However, the Suitors did not yield and attacked him and his family. In any case, Telemachus asked for the support of his demos but everyone remained silent; they did not give their approval. Apparently, his proposals were rejected. This shows that the demos had power. As we learn later (see below the section on the meetings by Suitors), the Suitors were not so unpopular as one might think by sketchily reading Homer. However, Telemachus achieved to expose the Suitors and give an indication of the political instability which existed in the politeia of Ithaca. Furthermore, and more importantly he informed the demos that he was going to take the situation into his own hands and act immediately. This was the beginning of something that worried

<sup>16</sup>Later Odysseus himself, disguised as a beggar, asked Telemachus why there was a political instability in Ithaca. Odysseus was wondering whether this was because the people (λαοὶ) of Ithaca demos (δήμιον) became his enemy "ἦ σέ γε λαοὶ ἐχθαίρουσ' ἀνὰ δῆμιον" [16.95–16.96] or there was an intrafamily quarrel with his brothers on who would rule Ithaca. The emphasis here is on the role of people and the demos of Ithaca because Odysseus knew that Telemachus had no brothers.

<sup>17</sup>It is interesting to note that new archaeological evidence showed that in ancient Athens there was personification of the Athenian people (the concept of demos) which was represented by a common mortal; see Glowacki (2003).

the Suitors because presumably the people of Ithaca did not know the details of all these and their silence might also be interpreted as not knowing who to believe -- the Suitors who were many and from aristocratic families, or Telemachus who was just a child, albeit the son of king Odysseus. The meeting ended in a stalemate.

### **The First Meeting of Penelope's Suitors [4.659–4.673]**

Four days after the general assembly of the demos of Ithaca, Suitors had been taken by surprise when they found out that, despite their calculations, Telemachus did depart from Ithaca to find out his father whereabouts. On the sixth day, Telemachus was discussing with the king Menelaus of Sparta. About the same time, Homer told us that during the dinner the Suitors called an emergency meeting, stopping their games "παῦσαν ἀέθλων". They sat all together "μνηστήρας δ' ἄμυδις κάθισαν" [4.659]. Their leader seemed to be Antinous the son of Eupitheis who started the meeting telling them that they had underestimated Telemachus. They were wrong when they said that he would not do the risky trip "φάμεν δέ οἱ οὐ τελέεσθαι" [4.664]. It is the first recognition that Telemachus was not a hesitant and irresolute child anymore. He posed a serious threat to their objectives.

But what was their objective? Homer had given us the impression that the Suitors of Penelope were in a permanent meeting throughout the events he described. Almost every day they had been meeting at Odysseus' palace as they had been participating in symposiums which included dinners, music entertainment, and mating with the palace's female servants. It is then natural to assume that they had plenty of time to discuss various political issues. Two issues are important for our purposes here: first, the number of Suitors, and second their ideology or political objectives they had, if any.

Homer told us later that the total number of Suitors was 108, coming from four different places: "μνηστήρων δ' οὐτ' ἄρ' δεκάς ἀτρεκέες οὔτε δύο οἶαι, ἀλλὰ πολὺ πλέονες: τάχα δ' εἴσεται ἐνθάδ' ἀριθμόν. ἐκ μὲν Δουλιχίου δύο καὶ πενήκοντα κοῦροι κεκριμένοι, ἕξ δὲ δρηστήρες ἔπονται: ἐκ δὲ Σάμης πίσυρές τε καὶ εἴκοσι φῶτες ἔασιν, κὶ ἦρθαν ἀκόμα εικοσιτέσσερες ἀπ' τοῦ νησὶ τῆς Σάμης, ἐκ δὲ Ζακύνθου ἔασιν εἴκοσι κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν, ἐκ δ' αὐτῆς Ἰθάκης δυοκαίδεκα πάντες ἄριστοι" [16.245–16.251]. The four different places were Dulichium, Same, Zacynthus and Ithaca which were mentioned earlier by Telemachus "ὅσσοι γὰρ νήσοισιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι, Δουλιχίῳ τε Σάμῃ τε καὶ ὑλήεντι Ζακύνθῳ, ἠδ' ὅσσοι κραναὴν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν" [1.245–1.247].

What is important here is that Telemachus (Homer) used the word "ἄριστοι" which indicates some sort of aristocracy. Not all aristocrats, but those who were dominant "ἐπικρατέουσιν". It is also of interest to note that all these aristocrats were coming from Ithaca and three from the nearby islands. For this paper, it would have been extremely useful if Homer had provided information why the aristocrats of these islands were claiming the throne of Ithaca.

Homer in the twenty-second rhapsody provided all the details of the political differences between king Odysseus and the Suitors as a group of people who had

been opposing him. Odysseus accused them [22.35–22.41] for wasting his wealth, sleeping with his female servants, and wanting to marry his wife without any respect for Gods without any fear of their nemesis. Now was the time to be punished and pay with their lives, "νῦν ὑμῖν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ' ἐφῆπται" [22.41]. On this occasion, one of the Suitors, Eurymachus, stood up and very diplomatically accused Antinous, another Suitor, who had already been killed first by Odysseus. Eurymachus made crystal clear that Antinous' objective was not so much a lust for his wife, but to kill Telemachus and become the king of Ithaca. Or in his own words, "οὐ τι γάμου τόσσον κεχρημένος οὐδὲ χατίζων, ἀλλ' ἄλλα φρονέων, τὰ οἱ οὐκ ἐτέλεσσε Κρονίων, ὄφρ' Ἰθάκης κατὰ δῆμον ἐῦκτιμένης βασιλεύοι αὐτός, ἀτὰρ σὸν παῖδα κατακτείνειε λοχίσας" [22.50–20.53]. I have underlined the two most important words: "δῆμον" and "βασιλεύοι" which here means politeia and rule as king respectively.

It seemed that the Suitors had people's support as mentioned above. I will have the opportunity to discuss it more during the second meeting of Suitors mentioned by Homer. Thus, it was natural for Antinous to have the ambition not to abolish kings but instead he wanted himself to become king once he married Penelope. Even during this scene of the process of assassinations of Suitors, Eurymachus, when he failed to bribe Odysseus with money to save their lives and of course gaining time to respond with force, he tried to encourage all the Suitors to defend themselves and told them that once they went outside the palace, they would be able to get people's support, "ἔλθωμεν δ' ἀνὰ ἄστῳ, βοῆ δ' ὄκιστα γένοιτο: τῷ κε τάχ' οὗτος ἀνὴρ νῦν ὕστατα τοξάσσαιτο" [22.77–22.78]. Homer used the word "ἄστῳ" which means the city and not the demos. This is interesting which might show that the Suitors were expecting to get the support of a segment of the demos of Ithaca where their popularity was greater. Second, Eurymachus pointed out that if this happened, this would be the last time that Odysseus fought. This might show that Odysseus was the not-so-popular and sympathetic ruler as Homer wanted us to believe. This is further reinforced by Odysseus' decision to keep secret the massacre of all the Suitors for the night because he was fearing strong reaction from the people of Ithaca. This way he would have time to prepare his defense. As a matter of fact, his support the next day from the people of Ithaca was almost non-existent. One may safely assume that Odysseus was not so popular.

Thus, the decision of the Suitors' first meeting to kill Telemachus had political underpinnings and it was not a simple personal difference of characters, even though Homer struggled to persuade us that Suitors behaved very maliciously. If this was true, they would not enjoy the popular support that was apparently enjoyed by the people of Ithaca.

The decision of this first meeting was unanimous and all supported the idea "οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπήγεον ἠδ' ἐκέλευον" [4.673]. They then decided on the plan to kill Telemachus. The idea was to prepare a ship with armed men and wait outside Ithaca for Telemachus' ship to return --A well-thought plot, but Athene had other plans which were more effective. However, she wanted to have the Gods' approval and thus, the next meeting mentioned in the *Odyssey* took place on the mountain of Olympus at Zeus' palace.

**Gods' Second Meeting on the Seventh Day of *Odyssey* [5.3–5.49]**

This meeting was a follow-up of the first one. Early in the morning, Gods took their position in their thrones "θῶκόνδε καθίζανον" [5.3]. Most probably, Athene called the meeting because now there was no introduction by Zeus unless Homer chose to start with Athene's intervention and not mentioning previous speeches. She seemed to be under tremendous time pressure; there were three reasons for this: first, the second part of the plan was not implemented; second, Poseidon was about to return from Ethiopia; third, Telemachus' life was in danger because the Suitors conspired to kill him. Athene started by accusing again Gods' unfairness. Mortals and their kings would have no incentive to promote justice "μηδὲ φρεσὶν αἴσιμα" [5.9]. If Gods did not reward good behaviour, but instead punished them like they did with Odysseus, mortals would not trust and respect Gods anymore. Here Athene used the word "αἴσιμα" which might as well mean that the acceptance of Gods by mortals was in question.

Her complaint was that the second part of the agreed plan in the first meeting was still unexecuted. According to the decision taken during the first general assembly six days ago, Hermes was supposed to go to Calypso's island, Ogygia, and inform her about Gods' collective decision during the first meeting. However, Zeus responded to Athene not as a Goddess but as her daughter, "τέκνον ἐμόν, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων" [5.22]. Zeus used the word ἔπος which now is used for epic poetry but originally meant just "saying something". Now Zeus told his daughter why such a word (ἔπος) came out from the bench/wall (ἕρκος) of her teeth (ὀδόντων). He told her that nothing had changed as far as their collective decision was concerned and to prove that, Zeus gave an immediate order to Hermes to implement the second part of the plan which was to ask Calypso to let Odysseus free to return to his homeland. Zeus told Hermes to inform Calypso about their unmistakable (νημερτέα) Gods' decision (βουλήν<sup>18</sup>) [5.30]. Hermes immediately executed the plan after the meeting ended. Thus, the decision of the first meeting was reinforced and new ones were taken such as Athene would take care of Telemachus life.

Poseidon was still in Ethiopia and he did not know anything about these decisions. Zeus wanted to accommodate his concerns as well. For this reason, he suggested, and presumably it was accepted by all, that Odysseus before he eventually returned to Ithaca, would be struggling at the sea for twenty days. After this ordeal, he would land on the island of Scherie where the Phaeacians lived. These twenty days would have given Poseidon plenty of time to make Odysseus' life rough in his waters, but at the end and according to the unanimous decision by all other Gods. Odysseus had to return safe to his homeland. Zeus also informed the other Gods about his plan concerning what would happen to Odysseus. In doing so, everyone was aware about his intentions. This way, he, indirectly,

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<sup>18</sup>The word "βουλή" in Homer is usually related to Gods and means apart from decision, wish and will. It somehow relates to collective decision. It is interesting to note that the word itself, as many others from Homer, has survived in modern Greek meaning among many other things and "parliament"; a political body where collective decisions are made. It is still used to mean decisions and wills of individuals or a group of people who make decisions.

obtained their approval. The tone of his voice was such that it could be interpreted as a threat. Nobody would have dared to undermine his plan for Odysseus. Homer did not give us more information, but he did tell us that when Zeus gave the order to his son Hermes to inform Calypso about Gods' decision he did not disobey "οὐδ' ἀπίθησε" but executed the order immediately "ἀντίκα" [5.43–5.44]. It is fair to assume that nobody from the participating Gods disobeyed (ἀπίθησε) and of course when Calypso heard from Hermes the ultimatum, she had no other choice but to abide by Gods' collective decision.

However, we do learn later that Hermes brought the bad news to Calypso. He said that Zeus ordered him to come, but he did not want, "Ζεὺς ἐμέ γ' ἠνώγει δεῦρ' ἐλθέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα" [5.99]. He did not say anything in the meeting. Hermes' position might have been a diplomatic one; on one hand, he did what Zeus told him to do, and on the other he told Calypso that he did not want to do it but he did it because of his fear of Zeus. But it is not clear what he did not want: bring the message or he did not agree with the message itself? As all diplomats, Hermes' statement and position had more than one interpretation. On the other hand, Hermes was vindicated because Calypso initially got mad and she responded by swearing at all male Gods and accusing them of jealousy when such an immortal Goddess has had erotic relations with mortal men. In her own beautiful words: "σχέτλιοί ἐστε, θεοί, ζηλήμονες ἔξοχον ἄλλων, οἳ τε θεαῖς ἀγάσθε παρ' ἀνδράσιν εὐνάζεσθαι" [5.119–5.120]. The choice of the word "σχέτλιοί" is an excellent one because in Homeric writings had a double antithetical meaning: a positive one meaning patient, enduring, strong, resolute, unyielding, firm and a negative one meaning cruel, ruthless, savage, inhuman, and beastly. Homer at his best. But at the end, she yielded to Zeus' wish and accepted the verdict to set Odysseus free [5.137–5.139], recognizing that she could not disobey; no immortal can do that "οὔτε παρεξελθεῖν ἄλλον θεὸν οὔθ' ἀλιῶσαι". Hermes supported her decision by warning her that she should protect herself from Zeus' anger, "Διὸς δ' ἐποπίζεο μῆνιν, μή πῶς τοι μετόπισθε κοτεσσάμενος χαλεπήνη" [5.146–5.147]. Later on, Homer informed us that Calypso obeying Zeus brought the news to Odysseus [5.150]. The amazing lesson is that Calypso helped Odysseus to prepare his departure by showing what true love is all about. A beautiful woman promised everything to Odysseus including real immortality. At the end she lost. Odysseus, on the other hand, being a smart man he was, told Calypso that she was much better than his wife, but he wanted to return to his homeland. And for this, he would sacrifice his immortality promised by Calypso. A typical man when he wants to leave a lover. Most probably he was bored to death. In *Iliad*, Achilles had a choice between to live as a common mortal and pass away old and infamous, or die now young but famous. He chose eternal fame and he got it. Odysseus met Achilles when he visited the world of dead. Achilles told him that now he would have preferred infamy if he had the choice. Life above all!

I find this second Gods' general assembly very important because a number of lessons can be drawn for the implementation of collective decisions, even at the level of immortals. Firstly, even Gods delay the implementation of their divine plans. Thus, it is very common for plans which were decided earlier through a

collective decision process to be re-evaluated. Some parts of the plan usually are not implemented for various reasons. Here we find that one important part of the plan assigned to an unenthusiastic Hermes was not realised. We do not really know the reason and Zeus did not ask for Hermes' explanation or apology. Secondly, as in many meetings of mortals in real life, the revised plan now included a clear and detailed roadmap with deadlines of implementation. Hermes had to do his job immediately after the meeting, and Poseidon would have twenty days to make Odysseus' life miserable. Again, Athene was assigned to take care of other details and intervene whenever necessary to straighten out the implementation of Zeus' plan. Again, this is very common in collective decision-making to assign the chief role of implementing the plan to the one who has the greatest interest in its successful implementation. Athene had a keen interest in the project. Thus, if the project was not implemented according to the plan, nobody would have criticized Athene for undermining its execution.

A final note should be made on Zeus awkward and difficult position which is very common for those who had to make the final decision after hearing all the interested parties. Athene wanted Odysseus to return to his homeland. Calypso wanted Odysseus for herself. Poseidon wanted Odysseus to suffer away from his homeland for as long as he could enforce it. Zeus' position was very difficult indeed. It seems to me that Zeus had no interest in the story and the fate of Odysseus. He tried to find a solution that would please both his daughter and his brother. Of course, at the end, Zeus yielded to Athene and let her have her own way. A very common story. Daughters and especially wise ones, at the end get what they want from their fathers. No mortal would want to be in Zeus position. Of course, Calypso was angry at Zeus because she was truly in love with Odysseus offering him everything and even more than what a mortal beautiful woman can offer to a man. If he stayed with her, he would have immortality, eternal youth, an ageless beautiful woman to serve him, and an island which Homer described as a paradise. What else would a mortal man want? This shows how inelastic -to use an economic term- nostos is. It is of interest to note that Calypso was served by her domestics, but Odysseus was served by her alone. Despite all this treatment, Odysseus from the first day until the last of these seven years, wanted to return to his homeland. Calypso had seven years to persuade him, but she did not succeed. After all, Calypso should not have complained because Zeus allowed her to have Odysseus for seven years, now it was time to let him go. As a woman in true love, she helped Odysseus with all the preparations of departure. These preparations took four days and especially four nights. Homer gave an indication what happened only in the first night.

Odysseus departed, and after a long sea voyage with Poseidon giving him a hard time in the last few days, finally achieved to reach Scherie, the island of the people of Phaeacians where Alcinous was a king. This was an ideal politeia. At last, this place was finally Odysseus' final obstacle before he reached his destination. But it was a pleasurable obstacle if one considers the beauty of Alcinous' daughter Nausicaa. During his stay in Scherie, he witnessed many events such as sports, music, dance and singing. Most important for our purpose here was a general assembly of the people of Phaeacians which was called by their

king Alcinous with Odysseus being a guest. This general assembly of the demos of Phaeacians is discussed in the following section.

### Phaeacians General Assembly [8.1–8.49]

Early in the morning of the thirty-third day of the *Odyssey*, the king of Phaeacians, Alcinous, woke up and called for a meeting of all the leaders (ἡγήτορες) and protectors (μέδοντες) of his kingdom in the usual place of convening which was called agora (ἀγορῆν): "Φαιήκων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες, εἰς ἀγορῆν ἰέναι" [8.11–8.12]. For all intents and purposes of this article, this constituted the demos of Phaeacians. But how many people were altogether? It all depends on what is meant by leaders (ἡγήτορες) and protectors (μέδοντες). Who and how many belonged to each of the two groups? What was the demarcation criterion between the two? One assumption, based on my etymology of the two words, might be that the first were some kind of aristocrats and the second were land or ship owners. The latter may also be considered as some kind of city guards because Phaeacians were known for their ability in seawares. A more precise word would have been μέδωνάλος which means the master (μέδων) of the sea (άλος).

Definitely those who participated in the assembly in the agora were not a handful of people. Such a meeting could have taken place in the main room of the royal palace which normally would seat at least 100 people. Thus, we may assume that the number of people who attended the assembly were many more. Homer himself informed us that the agora was full of people and all seats were taken, "καρπαλίμως δ' ἔμπληντο βροτῶν ἀγοραί τε καὶ ἔδραι ἀγρομένων" [8.16–8.17]. We also get the information early on that the agora of Phaeacians was built by the ships "Φαιήκων ἀγορῆνδ', ἧ σφιν παρὰ νηυσὶ τέτυκτο" [8.5]. It is important that Homer mentioned "τέτυκτο" but for what reason it was built is not clear. He also mentioned that the agora had seats (ἔδραι). Later on, the same word is used by Sophocles to mean the meeting of an assembly. I assume that this was a regular meeting place of the demos of Phaeacians

Once this huge crowd was assembled so fast (καρπαλίμως), king Alcinous took the floor having by his side the "stranger" Odysseus. He addressed the crowd by stating that this foreigner, whose name was not known to him either, asked for help to return to his homeland. He recommended to assist him because this was part of their custom. Never before in the past were such requests rejected. The admission that the Alcinous did not know the stranger's name did not come as a surprise to the demos and of course not to the readers of *Odyssey* because they knew that any stranger who asked for philoxenia was protected by certain customs which included not to ask any questions about his whereabouts until the end of the philoxenia. This way philoxenia was offered equally to all, rich and poor, strong and weak<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup>Eumaeus (the swineherd) and Telemachus in the sixteenth rhapsody of *Odyssey* is a case where this is also demonstrated. They offer the same philoxenia to a stranger beggar without knowing that he was Odysseus disguised by Athene. Without asking his name they offered him the best of

Then, the king asked for their consent and approval of his plan "πομπήν δ' ὀτρύνει, καὶ λίσσεται ἔμπεδον εἶναι. ἡμεῖς δ, ὡς τὸ πάρος περ, ἐποτρυνώμεθα πομπήν" [8.30–8.31] by providing a black ship with fifty-two excellent oarsmen. It seems that there was no objection. Then he proceeded with an invitation to dinner but only to those who held a royal sceptre (σκηπτοῦχοι βασιλῆες). Who were these? Homer did not tell us. We can infer that these were a small group of the Phaeacians belonging to ἡγήτορες, a kind of aristocracy. Of course, from a logistical point of view, Alcinous could not have invited to his palace the entire demos of Phaeacians.

Why Alcinous did not only simply inform the demos of Phaeacians, but asked for a collective decision? Why had he informed them in the first place? Through informing a group of people about something you make them responsible of what is going to follow, even if you do not have a dialogue with them and/or a vote at the end. But Alcinous went one step further and asked his *demos* for their help by using the word "we" (ἡμεῖς) instead of "I" and as always (ὡς τὸ πάρος περ), we must provide this help. Why would he have to ask for their permission since, as a king, could have provided the help himself? It is obvious that the option of a "no" was on the table. At the end of his uninterrupted speech, he invited those who hold a royal sceptre to join him in the palace, and stated that nobody rejects it (μηδέ τις ἀρνεῖσθω). Of course, this refers to the invitation to the dinner, but as this was part of the entire speech one may interpret it that the king asked all those present not to reject his entire proposal. Homer did not tell us if there was anyone rejecting it.

By the end, he asked his caller (cyrix) to invite to the symposium the divine singer Demodocus (καλέσασθε δὲ θεῖον ἀοιδὸν Δημόδοκον). His name is composed of demos and a noun which we found in later writings to mean "men of fame". Homer used another name, similar to Φήμιος (fame) who sung in the symposium of Ithaca when Athene visited Odysseus' palace and encouraged Telemachus to get into action by calling first the general assembly of the demos of Ithaca, and then depart to find information about his father's whereabouts.

I would like to emphasize a few things. Firstly, king Alcinous called the meeting announcing its purpose. I assume that he had the right to do so. Secondly, Phaeacians were not surprised, but quickly (καρπαλίμως) run into the agora. I assume that this was a relatively common (frequent) practice to call a meeting of the demos. I also assume that those whom run into the agora had the right to participate in such meetings. After all, the call was for a specific group of people: ἡγήτορες and μέδοντες. I also assume that they all were men. Thirdly, these meetings must have been very popular because all seats were taken "ἔδραι ἀγρομένων". One interpretation could be that participants knew that such meetings were followed by an entertainment program such as an athletic competition and/or a symposium with singing, music and dancing. Thus, it should not come as a surprise that so many people packed (ἔμπληντο) the agora in the expectation of an entertainment to be followed. As it turned out, Alcinous, their king, did not disappoint them. He offered a full-fledged entertainment program. Of course, curiosity to see the stranger could have been another reasonable explanation. For

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hospitality including sending him wherever he wanted to go. On the issue of philoxenia in ancient Greece, see Papanikos (2020a).

an isolated island, in an era of infrequent travelling, a visitor is a spectacle by himself, worth attending.

Summing up, king Alcinous felt obliged not to hide the stranger in his palace, but to call all Phaeacians in the agora. No other details are given, but we can infer that the purpose of the meeting was (a) informative and (b) make a collective decision. King Alcinous, for whatever reasons which are not known to us, did not want to keep the stranger's philoxenia at his palace a secret. Why? No answer was given by Homer. It seems to me that in his opening speech to the demos of Phaeacians sounded apologetic and appealed to the custom to justify his offering of hospitality and help to a stranger. Was it a tradition or an obligation? My interpretation is that king Alcinous wanted a collective decision revealing a new type of ruling by kings in this transitional Homeric period. Or, quite possibly, this was the message Homer wanted to communicate. The first step of a more democratic rule is to keep people informed. The second is to ask for their consent or indirect approval. The last step is to ask for their vote. I think the general assembly of the demos of Phaeacians was close to step two in this process of democratic trajectory.

Homer in this rhapsody provided us with the idea of an ideal society (demos). We are witnessing material wealth, a high level of civilization and a peaceful coexistence. Many people participate in common activities such as athletic and cultural events. Women are free to move around and speak to foreigners even though gossiping is a problem, as this is revealed by the dialogue between Odysseus and Alcinous' daughter Nausicaa, which is demonstrated by her unwillingness to enter together with Odysseus in the city. If this society did not exist, as many commentators have stated, then Homer must be credited as envisioned a future society with more people participating in the events of the demos. Participation is the essence of democracy. Homer was a forerunner of Plato in envisaging an ideal politeia.

### **Trojan's Assembly and the Trojan Horse [8.505–8.510]**

During the festivities in the land of Phaeacians the famous *ἄοιδός* Demodocus was singing about the achievements of Greeks in Troy and particularly Odysseus' triumphs without knowing that the stranger was Odysseus himself. At this point, Odysseus stepped in and asked Demodocus to recite the story of the Trojan horse which was Odysseus' great idea. Demodocus was flattered by Odysseus and started to tell the story of the Trojan horse. Part of the story included an apparent gathering of Trojans who were debating what to do with the horse. The Trojans brought the horse to their agora which presumably was their meeting place. They started debating what to do with that, "τοὶ δ' ἄκριτα πόλλ' ἀγόρευον ἡμενοὶ ἀμφ' αὐτόν: τρίγα δέ σφισιν ἦνδανε βουλή" [8.505–8.506]. Homer, in this passage, using Demodocus, told us that Trojans had three (τρίγα) different suggestions of what to do with the horse. Two of them used in this sentence relate to discussions taking place in general assemblies that I have already mentioned above. Firstly, the Trojans were making interventions (ἀγόρευον) regarding the three proposals.

Secondly, Homer used the word *βουλή* which means a decision. I conclude that this was the way the demos of Trojans were making decisions and the place was their agora which I assume was a large open space in the middle of the city. But what is really surprising is Homer's characterization of these debates. He called these discussions that were "ἄκριτα", which in Homeric epics may mean indecisive, confusing, or uninterrupted. I suppose the meaning here is that Trojans were really very concerned about what to do with the horse. It was a difficult decision for them to make because if this was sent by Gods and they had decided to destroy it, as some suggested, then they would commit hybris. Of course, the decision to bring it inside and not destroy it was part of their destiny to be ruined by Greeks, and particularly by Odysseus' trick.

Homer did not provide us with all the details of the decision because this was not his main theme in this passage. He wanted to praise Odysseus' ingenuity and prepare his audience of the next episode which does not concern us here. However, it does reveal the process of decision-making. People were speaking in public, making proposals, and apparently, they had a mechanism of making decisions. In this particular case we do not know if a decision was taken by majority voting or simply their king listened to all --in the end he made the decision himself.

### **Suitors Second Meeting [16.342–16.406]**

This second meeting was organized on the spot by the Suitors once they learned that Telemachus' ship returned to Ithaca safe despite their plot to kill him as they decided and planned during their first meeting. Suitors at the time were inside the palace and once they heard the bad news, went outside, passing through a great wall. They sat outside the yard door. This beautiful description provided the scenery of the meeting in the sense that it was a place that somehow guaranteed some privacy.

Two proposals were made. First, Antinous proposed to carry on with their original plan to kill Telemachus despite the fact that they failed in their first attempt. He told the other Suitors that they must act quickly because two things had been happening. On one hand, Telemachus' determination was increasing. He was becoming a serious opponent to their struggle to siege power. Telemachus now was very thoughtful in his actions and much more effective. In Antinous' own words, Telemachus "μὲν γὰρ ἐπιστήμων βουλῆ τε νόω τε" [16.374]. The three words in this sentence are so masterfully selected by Homer. First, the word "ἐπιστήμων" has survived in modern Greek as "scientist", and in English as episteme. In Homeric times this meant someone who was knowledgeable, wise, experienced, prudent, and cognitive. "Ἐπιστήμων" was someone that knew a subject very well. I believe in the case of Telemachus it could be interpreted that he knew or inherited the art of ruling and that was a serious threat for an ambitious Antinous. The word *βουλή* was mentioned above --it was used to describe a serious decision taken by an individual or by a group of people --and this is the reason the word has survived in modern Greek to mean "the parliament", as

already mentioned. The third word "νόϝ" means nous or mind, sense, intellect, and wit. In other words, the Suitors now had to compete with a serious contender of the throne in the kingdom of Ithaca.

The other development which justified a quick action was more serious. Antinous made the announcement that the people (λαοὶ) were diminishing their devotion/love (ἦρα) to/for them. It was not like before anymore that all (πάμπαν) supported them, "λαοὶ δ' οὐκέτι πάμπαν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἦρα φέρουσιν" [16.375]. Not only were they losing people's devotion but there was a danger that Telemachus would call a meeting/gathering/assembly (ὀμηγυρίσασθαι) of Greeks (Ἀχαιοὺς) to the agora (ἀγορήν) again and expose them as he did in the first meeting. However, this time, we infer that Antinous considered it as a serious threat, "ἀλλ' ἄγετε, πρὶν κεῖνον ὀμηγυρίσασθαι Ἀχαιοὺς εἰς ἀγορήν" [16.376], and added that Telemachus would not give up, "οὐ γάρ τι μεθησέμεναί μιν οἶω" [16.377], and he would stand in front of everybody and expose their plan to kill him [16.378–16.379]. Alternatively, Antinous continued, all Suitors must give up and return to their places because there was a danger that once the people learned of their plan to kill Telemachus, they will get upset and send them into exile far away from their homes.

The other Suitors, nevertheless, had second thoughts. They remained silent. At the end, Amphinomid, another Suitor, stood up and suggested that before they proceeded, they must make sure that the Gods would approve the assassination of Telemachus. All others seemed to agree with this proposal, "τοῖσιν δ' ἐπιήνδανε μῦθος" [16.406] and dissolved the meeting and headed towards the palace.

### **Suitors Third Meeting [20.240–20.247]**

The reference to this meeting is very sort --only eight verses—and it was taking place in parallel with Odysseus' discussion with Philoetius who was responsible for herding Odysseus' estate cattle. He was talking to a disguised Odysseus. In the middle of this discussion, the scenery moved to a meeting which apparently was taking place simultaneously, presumably outside the palace, with the participation of the Suitors. Most probably the meeting was at its climax because they were talking all together, "ὥς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον" [20.240]. At this point, Zeus sent them his sign: an eagle with a pageant in its nails. Amphinomids suggested that they must give up on their plan to kill Telemachus, "ὦ φίλοι, οὐχ ἡμῖν συνθεύσεται ἦδε γε βουλή, Τηλεμάχοιο φόνος" [20.245–20.246] because Zeus did not approve it. To this it seems that all agreed, "τοῖσιν δ' ἐπιήνδανε μῦθος" [20.247], and the meeting ended.

### **The Meeting of the Relatives (Mainly Fathers) of the Slaughtered Suitors [24.420–24.465]**

After Odysseus slain all Suitors who, by the way, were all young and from aristocratic families with popular support as mentioned above, their relatives heard

the bad news early the next morning and gathered to decide what to do. They wanted revenge. The leader of this group was the father of Antinous, named Eupitheis, who very emotionally and with tears in his eyes proposed to retaliate by killing Odysseus before he left Ithaca. However, there were reactions. First, Medon suggested that Odysseus, quite possibly, had the support of Gods otherwise he could not have done such a thing. He also told them that he saw an immortal guiding Odysseus' actions. This revelation scared them. Then, an old man by the name of Halisertes addressed them. He accused them that it was their fault that this happened because they did not listen to him and Medon when they warned them about their sons' folly behaviour. He proposed to take no further action against Odysseus. His proposal was not accepted by the majority of the participants. It is the first time Homer used explicitly a sort of a majority rule -- more than half "ἡμίσεων πλείους" [24.464] --but the rest did not approve and remained in their seats, "τοὶ δ' ἄθροοὶ αὐτόθι μίμνον" [24.464]. The rest went to kill Odysseus and his supporters. Eupitheis was the first to be killed, but the fighting was interrupted by Athene's intervention which was the result of the last meeting of Gods and of the entire book of *Odyssey* itself.

### Gods' Third Meeting [24.471–24.487]

It is not clear whether there was a meeting of all Olympians, or simply an exchange between Zeus and Athene. Homer told us that Athene was meeting with Zeus and they exchanged some words, but we do not know exactly what was said before. Presumably they were discussing the new developments and Athene was questioning Zeus what he had in his mind again: war or peace, "ἢ προτέρω πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ φύλοπιν αἰνὴν τεύξεις, ἢ φιλότητα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι τίθησθα;" [24.464]. The use of the word "προτέρω" is of interest here which might mean that Athene accused Zeus that he sought war again because he wanted to continue the war and the evil it entails with the sound of war (φύλοπιν). Athene gave (suggested) him the option of peace (φιλότητα). Zeus complained to Athene that so far she had gotten what she wanted. Presumably he was completely indifferent and bored with all these games. Finally, he told Athene to do as she pleased, "ἔρξον ὅπως ἐθέλεις" [24.481], but Zeus suggested that now Odysseus got his revenge on the Suitors, peace should be established and Odysseus should become a king for life. This is what Athene wanted to hear and immediately intervened to stop the fighting.

This is the end of the story. We do not really know what happened to Odysseus but the message from *Odyssey* is that Homer did not want to abolish the political system of having a king for life. After all, this was the wish of Zeus pending of course that the king was good with his people. If this was the case, then this politeia will flourish and become eudaemon because wealth (πλοῦτος) and peace (εἰρήνη) come together in abundance (ἄλις ἔστω) or in Zeus' own words, "πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη ἄλις ἔστω" [24.486].

## Conclusion

Homer's *Odyssey* educated many generations of Greeks and non-Greeks with ideals. Mortals should respect Gods and live their lives along the lines of the three apothegms found in the Oracle of Delphi: know yourself, nothing in excess and to guarantee something is madness. None of these are explicitly found in Homer's work but their meanings are all there. These three apothegms were expressed in the sixth century BCE but I believe Homer's influence had been tremendous.

Homer's *Odyssey* conveyed another more important message. Mortals and immortals should make decisions after having taken into consideration other people's or God's feelings, opinions, and reactions. Meetings may serve the purpose of conveying information, allowing for exchanging of ideas and ultimately deciding what to do. In *Odyssey*, it is obvious that Homer favored collective decision-making at the level of a *politeia*, but he did not go so far as to suggest the abolishment of the political system where a king was the ruler. He favored good kings like Alcinous in the land of Phaeacians who was listening to his people by meeting with them regularly in the agora. One may contrast the political plight of Ithaca without its king Odysseus with the "paradise" of Alcinous' *politeia*. Thus, for Homer the choice was not between kings and no kings, but between good and bad kings. It took a few centuries and thanks to the *Odyssey's* clear message, people realized that they have the power to establish a system called democracy where the majority (*πλείονας*) decide and rule.

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